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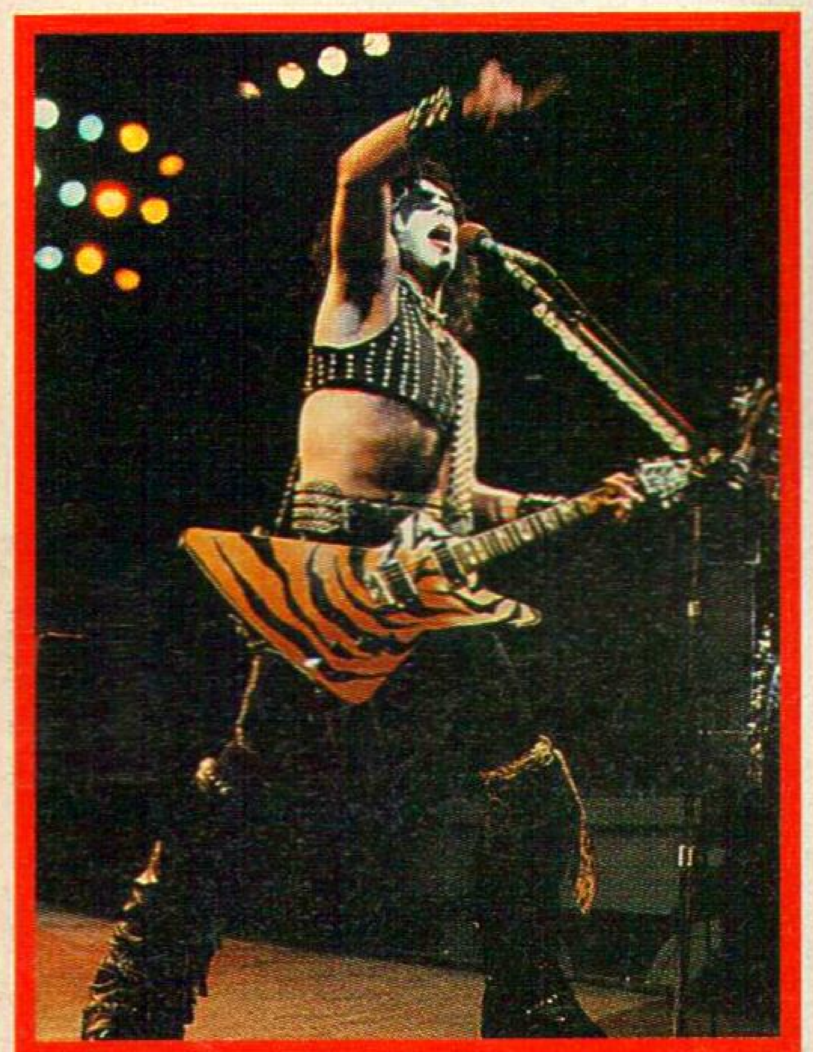

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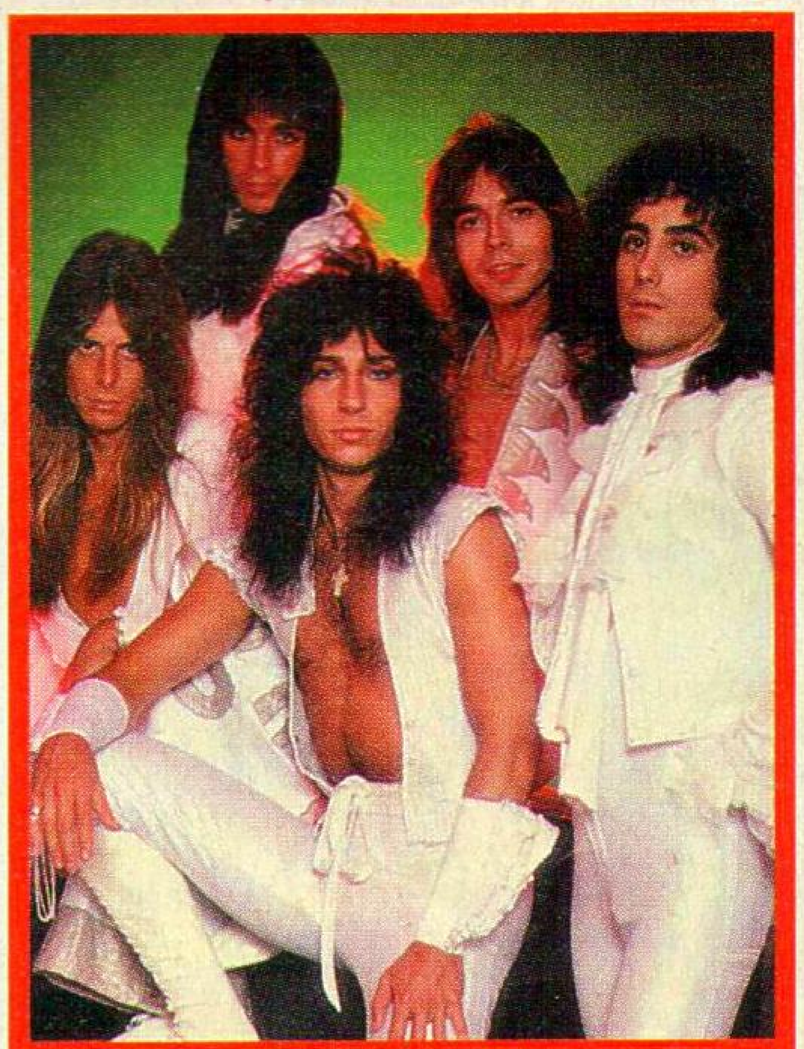

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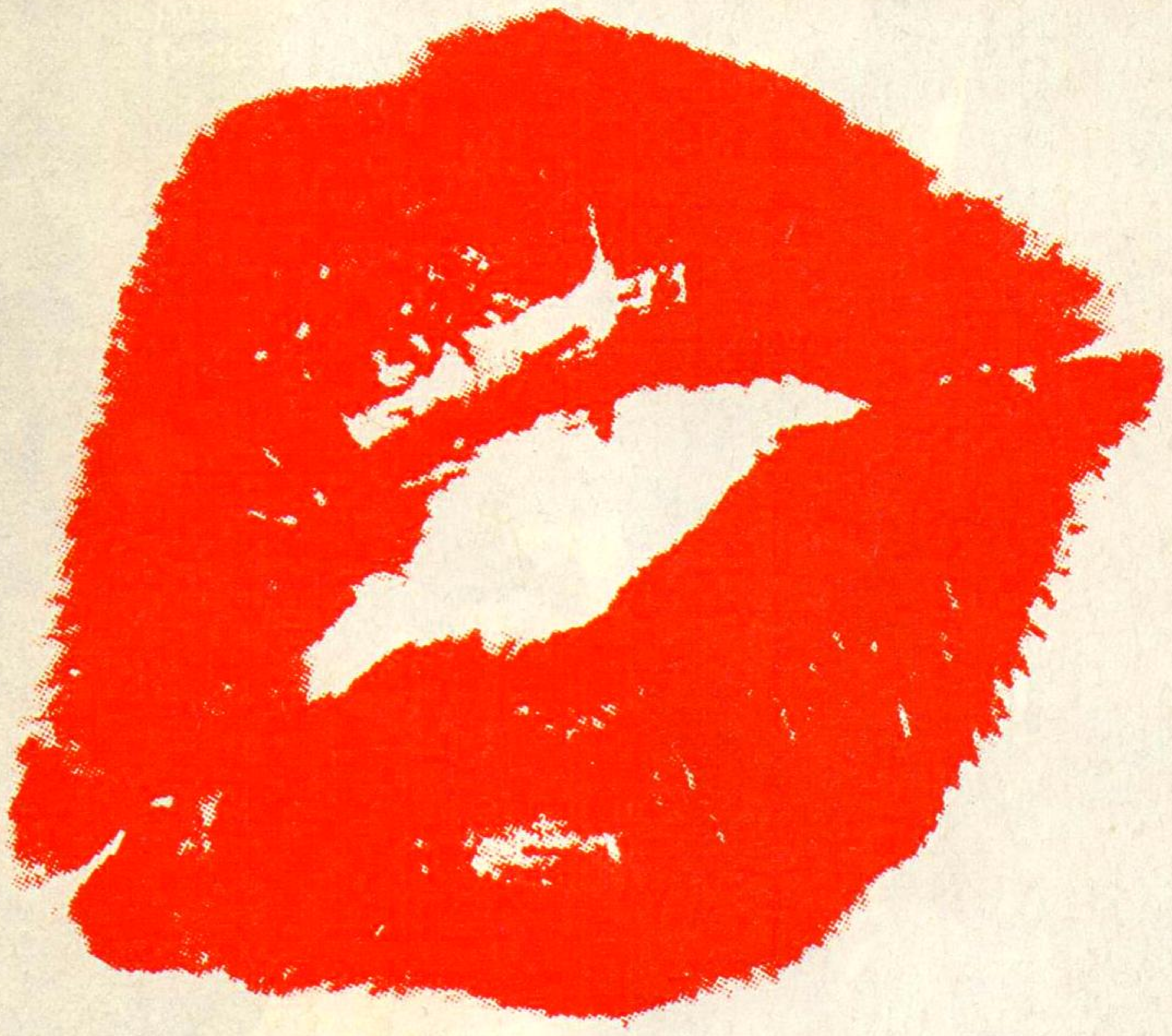

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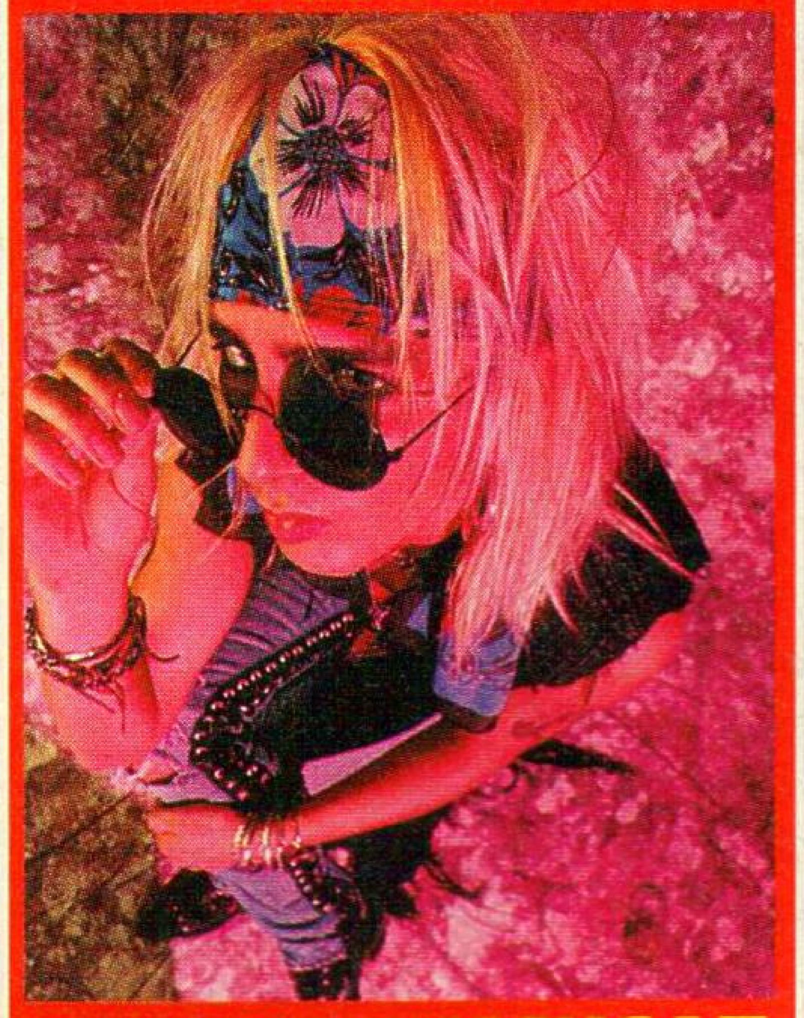

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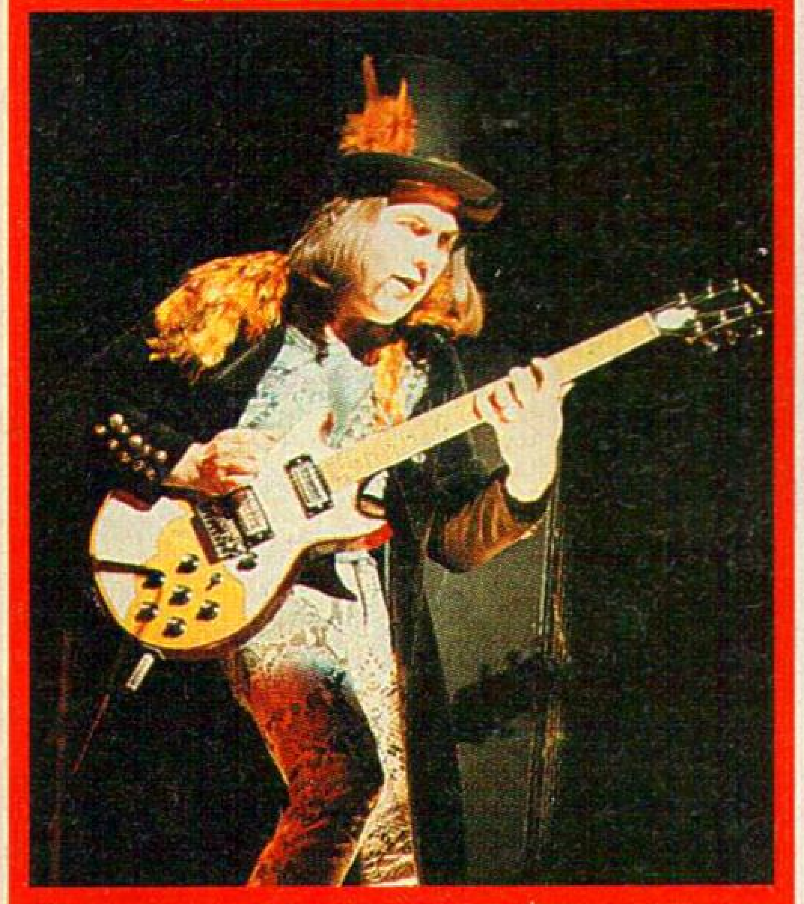

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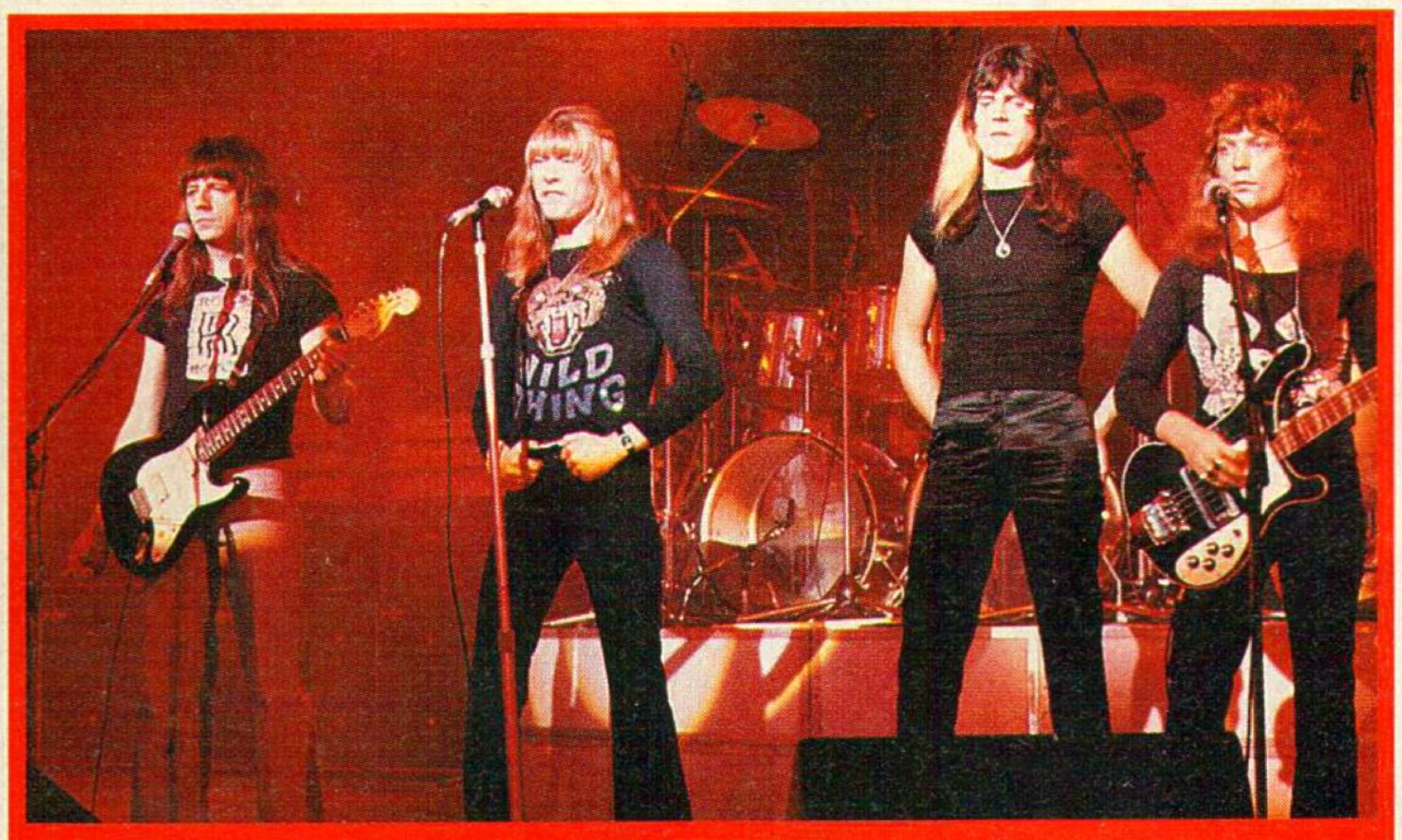

SWEET

CYCLE SLUTS

POISON, MÖTLEY CRÜE, GUNS N' ROSES POSTERS

MEGA METAL
KERRANG!
POISON

KONTENTZ

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WELCOME TO Mega Metal Kerrang! *issue 13. . . an unlucky number for some, particularly if you're a Thrash Metal fan!*

After 12 editions/ three years of featurin' some of the grossest, grungiest, gruesome-est rock around, Mega Metal *has undergone what we in the trade call 'an editorial realignment'.*

Yep, throughout 1989, each issue of MMK! *– your favourite quarterly offshoot of the regular, weekly* Kerrang! *– will now be spotlightin' a* different *sub-genre of the multi-hued, multi-faceted musical movement known only as. . . Heavy Metal.*

And this, friends 'n' fiends, is what you can expect to detect:

This ish: a 56 page Glam extravaganza, brimful 'n' bulgin' with the best in Sleaze, Glitter and Shock Rock!

Next ish (number 14, on sale at the end of April): a wondrously wimpy 'n' utterly limp-wristed all-AOR edition!

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This is gonna be a great year for Mega Metal Kerrang!

Believe it.

GEOFF BARTON – MANAGING EDITOR

STRIPED PERFECTERZ

"It can't be less than stupendous, really," opines PEPSI TATE in a higher than usual voice. He's talking about the forthcoming second TIGERTAILZ LP – their first with singer KIM HOOKER – which the feline ones (pictured right) are currently striving to *purr*-fect. PHIL WILDING travels to darkest Milton Keynes for a saucer of Budweiser

THEY'VE GOT CONCRETE cows in Milton Keynes. They look like some giant child's blundering attempt at junior school creativity. They've got blue grass at their railway station, too (no, I don't think you can smoke it). And I know all of this because David Willis told me.

So, what in God's name are Willis and myself doing circumnavigating this hollow community that has attempted almost every underhand trick in the book to garner some character and depth to its shallow exterior? It looks cold and hideous. We go around one more time until we find Great Linford Manor Recording Studio; its brilliant antiquity looks warm against the concrete surround that lies a few hundred yards away. Things are looking up.

Two minutes in the door and nearly new Tiger Kim Hooker is smiling, "What's happening?"

Later the smile almost slips for good, but while I stroll around the snooker table on the second floor aimlessly shunting reds off the cushions, Willis shares studio space with producer Chris Tsangarides, 20 foot mic stands, umberella lights and Tigertailz. They all pout accordingly, spicing smiles with insults, while Ace daubs the slogan 'Lick My Stick' on his snare drum.

Within half an hour Pepsi, Kim and myself have slipped down into a generous Chesterfield suite and started on the ample tray of Budweisers in front of us. For some reason they boarded up the windows as soon as night fell.

"To keep us in?" offers Pepsi.

Kim is reasoning that the second Tigertailz album that they're now recording, and his first with the band, has to be the one thing that so far in this life he's really proud of, the one that will let him stand up and be counted.

"Since I've been born, I've f**ked around and been a total waste of space, just had a laugh really," he recalls. "I was in a band called Neon Spirit and they were the worst thing ever, but to me it was, like, stadium rock. I dread to think now what we really sounded like.

"It took me until last year to realise that it was shit."

There is no regret in his voice, just a hint of recognition that perhaps they really weren't the best thing in the world.

"And now," he continues, "the best way to prepare someone for this album is to sit them down and tell them that this singer is a guy who's always been an asshole and a bum and who's now said he's had enough and is really ready to go for it."

HIS DELIVERY is quietly intense and genuine. Pepsi has his own recollections of Neon Spirit. While he talks, a smile plays around his lips and his extensive array of cheap bracelets rattles with his animated, gesticulative speech.

"I was 13 when I first saw that band, and he," Pepsi waves his can at Kim, "had all this black hair and stilettoes and all of that, and the band were so in to it. I really hope that we as Tigertailz can capture that enthusiasm. I really don't think that they were ambitious, but they were giving it 100%. It was so important to them, they believed in it and in themselves."

But back to the new album which is soon to be released on an anticipating world. The one that has to prove the doubters wrong, justify the time spent away to the faithful. Show that there's more to this rare coloured four piece than extreme good luck and lipstick.

Pepsi: "With the first album we just chucked it all down and we didn't really think about what we were doing, and we certainly didn't take enough time. But with this one – he still refuses point blank to give away the title – it's not as if we've taken a drastic change in direction, we've just thought a lot more about the writing and the overall sound of the thing.

"Everyone has heard the way that Kim sings and all that it means now is that the music is more in accord with that. It will match his vocal style." He lets it hang for a while and draws up a massive grin, "Terrible.

"We know that there is a lot depending on this album, we have deals pending. . . " he considers their rapid rise for a moment. "We came from being absolute nothings to becoming one of the major contenders amongst British bands. So this time there are a lot of people waiting to see us.

"Also, because we've only played live a couple of times in the last year, people are turning up and saying, 'Oh, what's all the fuss about?' Unfortunately, if it doesn't go too well. . . "

Kim cuts in laughing, "What are you actually trying to say now?"

Pepsi lets him have a shot of the Bud for good measure, giving the dried flowers in a bowl on the table a rinse in the process. For some reason his voice rises half an octave.

"It can't be less than stupendous, really."

FOR ALL THEIR thinly veiled belly laughs, both Kim and Pepsi are all too aware that at this present moment in time Glam is no longer the favourite son of the musical sphere. Sleaze has begun to up-end many pretenders to the throne, and experimental funk rock is also attempting a stranglehold on the market. Pepsi has no pretensions as to what they're doing.

"I know it's a trasparent type of thing that we're doing, it's not something you can analyse, but I think we can put across the validity of it all."

Kim affirms this belief. "They are very fun songs, but not fun as in pissed up and thrown together."

Songs to be proud of, even.

"If we did something we didn't like," says Pepsi, leaning forward slightly, all in-jokes and chuckles aside, "and everyone got into it, then we'd get into it too. But with this stuff, if everyone hated it, we'd be pretty upset. We are proud of this; it's something we've worked very hard on."

Kim tilts his head and takes his feet off the table. "These songs have made me feel so confident. I listen to things like the ballad 'Heaven' (featuring Don Airey on keyboards) and I can't believe it's me. I'm never going to take second best again, I'm never going to let things go and say, 'That's alright'." The gleam comes back into his eye. "History in the making, Phil.

"I know that I've come on so much more, I know when I'm singing well, I believe in myself. I know I can sing with as much conviction as someone like Paul Stanley a few years ago and, say, Axl now."

IT ISN'T BULLISH bravado either, the intensity of their stares and strength of material testifies to their determination. Though, could we have a few more specifics? Their fingers are twitching to unveil their new baby, but business etiquette snaps it back.

"Hopefully, this album will excite people on all levels," beams Pepsi.

That isn't exactly what I'm fishing for, I tell him.

"There'll be a single at the beginning of March and the album'll come out in the middle of that month. Then we start the tour in Europe, then Britain, then we'll head over to the States."

He offers a shrug as way of recompense. Why not start the tour in Britain, Pepsi?

"Because in Europe they'll have no preconceptions about us, and then by the time we get to Britain we'll be shit hot. I mean, we have only played a half a dozen gigs with Kim."

The subject of the live show. Namely, most recent gig at London's Astoria where the majority of 'professional' opinion returned a damning and unanimous thumbs down on the performance. Kim draws in a breath and doesn't visibly release it again.

"I know I haven't been as good as I can be. It's like starting all over again, and I don't like playing in London anyway – it's a little like being thrown into the lions. There's this feeling that people have just gone there to hate me, and I just don't like it."

Understandably. Pepsi considers the balance.

"There were still kids down the front who were going mental and loving it, we've had mail since from those people saying so. But you've always got these

"I'm never going to take second best again . . . I know I can sing with as much conviction as someone like Paul Stanley a few years ago and, say, Axl now" – KIM HOOKER

KONTINUEZ PAGE 6

Pic David Willis

STRIPED

"I know it's a transparent type of thing that we're doing, it's not something you can analyse, but I think we can put across the validity of it all" – PEPSI TATE

FROM PAGE 4

people as the periphery who aren't looking to enjoy themselves, they're trying to judge. They're not immersing themselves in it, and that attitude doesn't work; rock music is always about getting involved.
anyway – it's a little like being thrown into the lions. There's this feeling that people have just gone there to hate me, and I just don't like it."

Understandably. Pepsi considers the balance.

"There were still kids down the front who were going mental and loving it, we've had mail since from those people saying so. But you've always got these people as the periphery who aren't looking to enjoy themselves, they're trying to judge. They're not immersing themselves in it, and that attitude doesn't work; rock music is always about getting involved.

"And given the choice between having a journalist or someone from a band complaining about the quality of the band, musically or otherwise, or a kid going home totally amazed and stunned at our antics, then there's *no* choice. I'd much prefer those kids to get off on it, because they were us five or six years ago; out to see a band, a larger than life rock band, which is hopefully what we are."

Kim: "I'd much rather be slagged off than ignored. It's the ultimate way of saying . . ." he draws himself up from his slumped position in the chair and pitches his voice somewhere around Jeeves The Butler and half the Home Counties, "Oh, look at me."

We break into spontaneous guffaws.

"We're just a couple of guys, and people seem to fail to see that, they think that we're sticking our noses in the air or something. All we want is that everyone enjoys themselves."

Pepsi loosely picks up the thread, then drags it off into another direction.

"It's not like we're transvestites and lock ourselves up and put on our girlfriends' clothes. Well, not all the time . . ." Kim gives me a concentrated stare and raises one eyebrow.

"Oh, we did stop that some time ago." Pepsi obviously wants this to be taken a little more seriously.

"It's not a personality defect – it's bringing your personality out in the open."

Like coming out of the closet, I suggest. He chooses to ignore it.

"If people see us as a joke then that's fine, because jokes make people laugh. That's not to say I enjoy people ridiculing our records or us, but I'm not going to sit there and try to convince them. Let them take the piss and get off on it, that's fine."

THOUGH PEOPLE tend to develop a different perspective once things start to build. Once things start to pull away, once things inflate in proportion, everyone wants to prick the balloon. Kim drops his guard, which he wears with an almost cheerless nonchalance.

"Before I joined this band I remember everyone slagging off Tigertailz, claiming that their breaks had come because Pepsi's dad was in 'Dempsey And Makepeace', and that Jay's father was working for BBC Radio. Jay's father works for Thorn EMI, he puts fire extingushers in for them. All utter crap.

"Basically, the only people who seem to enjoy themselves are the ones who don't get mixed up in this bullshit business. Just the normal people who get into something and love it."

He lets it all out.

"All the f**king wankers," his words are even and tempered though literally doused with an assured degree of hate. "Basically journalists are failed musicians, and there's all these has-beens who see some Welsh twats doing what they want to do and they're sick as f**k. There's probably three people in Wales who like me because I'm in this band, but it doesn't matter because I know what people used to say about this band before I joined."

The gong for the evening meal sounds while we're all handing each other conspiratory glances. Pepsi launches himself for the door, and takes the stairs down two at a time.

"Think, Phil, the next time you see us we'll have been to the moon and back, around the world twice, in and out of the Betty Ford Clinic."

He lingers at the bottom of the staircase.

"And we'll have a record that we're 101% proud of."

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TIGERTAILZ: recording a second album to prove the doubters wrong

Pic Joe Giron

SWEET AND SOUR

"People either laughed at us or simply walked away . . . I don't think any of us realised how big a monster we were creating for ourselves."
The bitter-SWEET recollections of '70s Glam Gods ANDY SCOTT and MICK TUCKER, as recorded by HOWARD JOHNSON

DO WE UP HERE at the mighty *K!* have a sixth sense or what?

I mean, here we are at *Kerrang!* mansions patting ourselves on the back at the stroke of genius that we've pulled in putting together our Glam rock special, when bugger me if the 'phone doesn't ring, and there's Virgin Video on the line telling us that they're releasing a Glam Rock compilation featuring all their favourite stars of the Glitter era.

Now that's what I call providence!

And there's more! Andy Scott and Mick Tucker, guitarist and drummer respectively with those ballroom blitzin' blockbusters of yore the Sweet, are in town and ready to talk!

Well, what could a poor boy do, but dust off the old silver platforms and head out West (W10 that is) to check out the whys and the wherefores.

"THE GUY WHO put this video together actually got in touch with me to help him find some old Sweet footage," explains a decidedly dapper and non-Glam Scott when we finally make our redezvous. "Because too often in the past people have dug up some appalling clip for, say, 'Blockbuster', that was only ever designed to be shown in the Outer Hebrides or some such place.

"You can't release a Glam Rock video without the Sweet, so I thought I might as well find something worthwhile to put on it.

"Although to our minds the band's Glam period was a very short span of time, maybe about a year between '72 and '73, it is still a part of what we went through and I guess it did influence a lot of people."

Sorry to disappoint all you people who worshipped Brian Connolly and the boys for their outrageous make-up and string of pop/rock hits such as 'Blockbuster' and 'Wig Wam Bam', but Scott seems more than anxious to dispel the notion that there was nothing more to his band than a period of one year and four hit singles.

"I'm not denying or decrying that period in the band's career at all," he says, "but people should know that there was an awful lot more to us than that. Although the stage clothes that we had at the time continued until about '75, the make-up was gone after a year!

"I find it frustrating that people in the UK have us stuck in one period of time, when in actual fact there were many different facets to what the Sweet did. A lot of people won't know that really before we had any success to speak of we were doing sets that included a medley of Who songs, a medley of Tamla Motown stuff, some weird West Coast covers, some of our own stuff and songs by Sabbath and Zeppelin."

IN FACT, THE whole time span of the band's Glam Rock period came about entirely by accident.

"It was just an experiment really," confirms Andy. "As a band, we'd been given a lot of artistic credit, but artistic credit alone doesn't pay the bills. We originally got in contact with Nicky Chinn and Mike Chapman when they asked us to sing on some demos that they had.

"You see, all four of us (the line-up being completed by bassist Steve Priest) were in effect lead singers, because we'd always wanted that tight harmony sound. Anyway, everybody really liked the stuff that we did and we got offered a deal."

OK, so it wasn't exactly their own stuff, but as Andy was quick to point out: "We could have said that we didn't want to do it, but to be totally honest it was an opportunity, and we took it, thinking that we could change things as we went along.

So it certainly doesn't seem that the band's Glam period,

aside from being their most successful in the UK, was all plain sailing.

"Not at all. We had horrible fights in the studio all the time because we had a very strong band feeling. Whenever someone wanted to bring in a session man we'd all go mental. By the time we were doing our fourth single it was very much a question of us having control about how the music was made, total control, or the band would split up."

"And I also think that, despite the hits, the public weren't ready to accept us totally," adds drummer Mick.

"Basically, we wanted to be taken seriously as musicians and I think that, with a lot of people, the image got in the way of that.

"You wouldn't have thought it would have made a blind bit of difference after the permissive '60s and what have you, but guys wearing make-up was still considered very left field. A lot of people thought we were gay and, particularly in America, having the name 'Sweet' didn't do much to dispel that rumour either! A lot of people either laughed at us or simply walked away.

"I GUESS THAT we were a prototype band in some ways because of all the groups who came after us, but to be honest we only did what we did in that period for a giggle.

"It originally came into our heads to do it because Brian had such pale skin that he always had to use a bit of pancake to make sure that his face didn't wash out completely under the stage lights. I don't think any of us realised exactly how big a monster we were creating for ourselves."

"Yeah, we were banned from playing all the Mecca ballrom complexes at the time," reminisces Andy, "which was quite a big thing! It was like, 'We don't want the likes of you here'.

"It's hard to believe some of the stuff that went down. I remember getting into a whole load of trouble in Belgium because the guy who ran the club was well over the fire limit in terms of punters, and then it was a club for the over 18s and two underage girls got on the stage and started dancing in a arrested and they were banged up with a bunch of murderers for a week. I think Mick and I only got away with it because our hair wasn't quite as outrageous!"

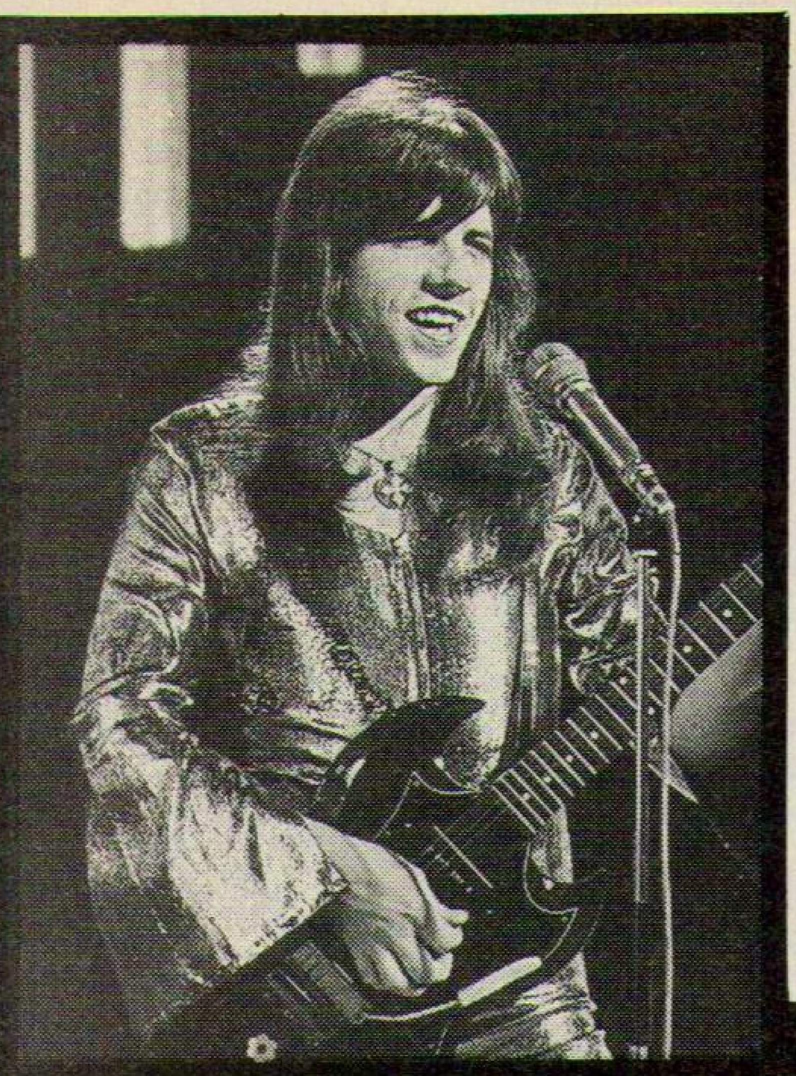
"It was farcical," continues Mick, "because it all went to court and the police made the girls and the owner of the club sign affidavits claiming that the group was totally outrageous and obscene. They were bringing out copies of the Stones' 'Sticky Fingers' album (the one with the zip built into the sleeve!) to prove that all rock music was depraved. Ridiculous.

"That business kept rearing its ugly head for years. I remember we were recording in Germany years later and rumours started flying around that Brian and Steve were going to be extradited, so they had to be flown back to Britain under a veil of secrecy until the heat was off."

AMAZING WHAT a bit of make-up could do really, wasn't it.

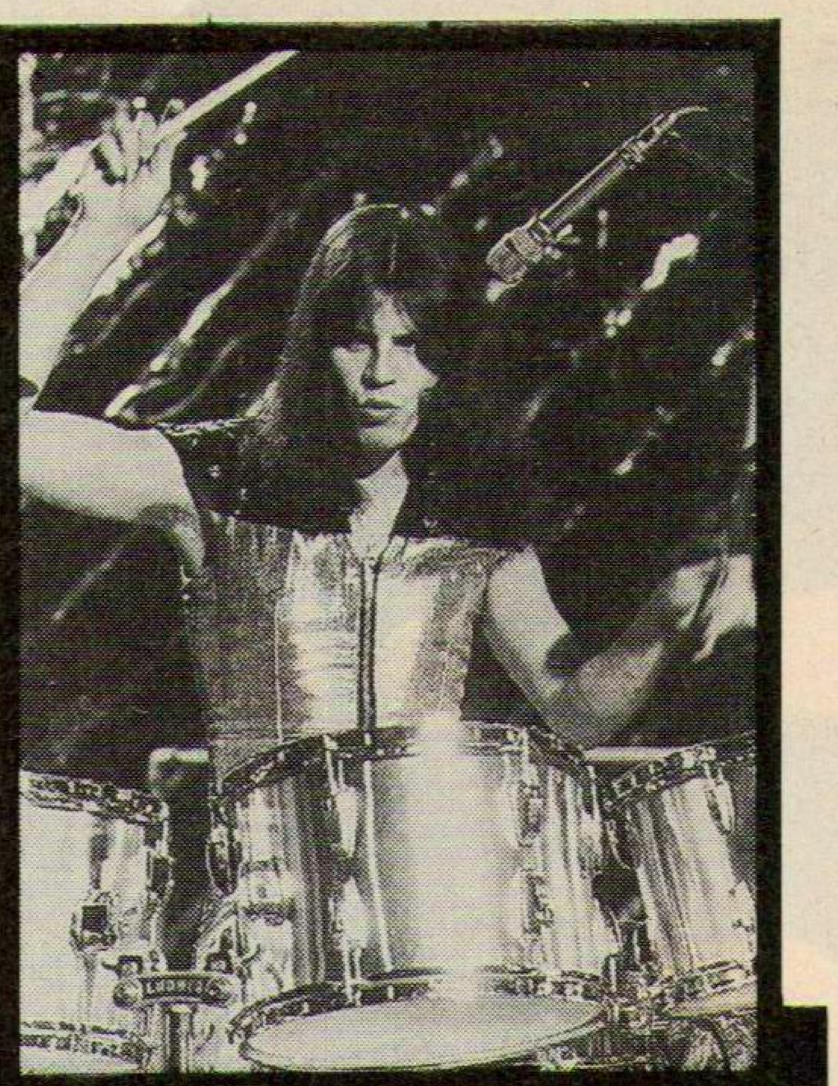
"Exactly," agrees Mick. "Possibly we were the

KONTINUEZ OVER



ANDY SCOTT: "To our minds, Sweet's Glam period was a very short space of time, maybe about a year between '72 and '73"

THE SWEET: Mike Chapman has recently been back in contact with the band, and a reformation could be on the cards



MICK TUCKER: "The bottom line was that we never really took it all that seriously. I don't think many of the other Glam bands around at the time did, either"

SOUR

FROM PREVIOUZ PAGE

instruments of our own downfall, because we did construct some of our singles around the image, and then we got stuck with it. What galls us in spite of everything is that we were successful on our own terms everywhere else in the world except for the UK.

"After all, let's face it, Chinn And Chapman wanted us to stay as this crazy Glam/pop band, but we really felt in our hearts that we wanted to be recognised as a serious, professional Hard Rock band.

"We had had 16 Top 20 hits with Chinn and Chapman and, to be brutal, we could have easily had 16 more, but we just wanted to break away from all that."

In fact, the more I try to delve into the Glam period of the band, the more Andy and Mick seem to reveal a total dissatisfaction with the era and what it brought afterwards.

This might even stretch as far as bitterness, in Andy's case. He claims that people dragging up that one phase in the band's history all the time "doesn't phase me any more", but I'm not so sure that this is entirely true.

"If you'd asked me about it in '78 I would have given you really short shrift, because we fought it for years trying to show that there was more to us than met the eye."

"The whole thing was just very weird," states Mick. "You can't really explain it in words, but doing gigs and having girls screaming at us while their boyfriends are trying to spit on us and kick us is definitely weird. Having girls trying to jump through the windows of the limo while their boyfriends try to throw a brick through 'em is odd!

"I think that we felt a lot of the pressure at the time because, as I said before, we had put this make-up on for a laugh but it had a profound effect on people.

"People were intimidated by us. We used to go into the pubs next door for a drink before gigs and all the fans who were there wouldn't even ask us for an autograph."

MAYBE THAT kind of pressure, the feeling of living life in a bubble, could have been made easier had the Glam scene really developed into some kind of movement where all the bands involved felt some kind of close ties, but as Noddy Holder from Slade also confirms in this issue, it never really felt that way to the groups involved.

Mick: "No, it didn't feel as if we were creating or being a part of a movement. It didn't have the same kind of vibe as the '60s did, with the whole Flower Power thing.

"When I look back on those times now I suppose there was a lot of originality, but all I felt that we were doing was interpreting the bands of the '60s, bands that we grew up with such as Cream and Led Zeppelin, in our own way.

"The bottom line was that we never really took it all that seriously, I don't think that many of the bands did.

"As far as I can remember, the only person who really seemed to be taking it all as some kind of art form rather than just a giggle was David Bowie. I remember seeing him doing 'Starman' on 'Top Of The Pops', because we were on the same show, and he was very seriously into what he was doing."

It seems that the Sweet's own interpretation of what they considered an art form revolved around being regarded as a straight down the line Hard Rock act, something which the British public was never prepared to accept.

The band had always tried to introduce the harder rock elements of that they did with numerous self-penned numbers kicking out the jams on the B-sides of the Chinni-Chap singles, but it was all to no available here in Blighty.

There seems to have always been the dichotomy for the band of craving the success that they had achieved with 'Ballroom Blitz' et al, but wanting to achieve it with their own, harder material.

And, as is often the case, the timing was all-important.

"I remember that a while before, Mike Chapman had suggested that we should use the twin ideas of horror and rock as a basis for live performance," recalls Andy. "And we could never really get a grasp on what it was he meant, but then we ended up seeing Alice Cooper and Kiss in the States and it all fell into place.

"By the time all this rock theatre had come in and was being received, we had all moved on to new things."

AND TRY AS they might, the band could never quite capture the public's imagination in the same way as they had before.

"We fell into the trap of spending too long on recording our material and not enough time actually going out and working it," explains Scott. "We'd be spending six months every year making a record, and that was too long.

"After all, the gigging aspect is the life blood of every rock band and the beauty of the hits that we had was that they had an energy and a feel that were there precisely because they were recorded in a single day.

"And then we also had the problems that we got saddled with an American company who didn't feel that they had a responsibility to support one of their acts that was out on the road in a finanacial way. We were also all living in the UK under a Labour government that was taxing us to the hilt.

"I think at one stage we were paying tax of 98p in the pound, so in effect I used what should have turned out to be my life savings to keep the band out on the road and working."

Which may explain why I keep detecting this undercurrent of bitterness pervading the atmosphere.

"Sure, at the time we regretted having created the image, but it's a part of history now," claims Scott. "There certainly aren't that many bands from as long ago as that who can honestly claim that they still have their records played all the time."

"And that's the best testimony to the band that there is," adds Mick. "When I listen back to the stuff that we did then I still think that it stands up, in terms of both musicianship and playing.

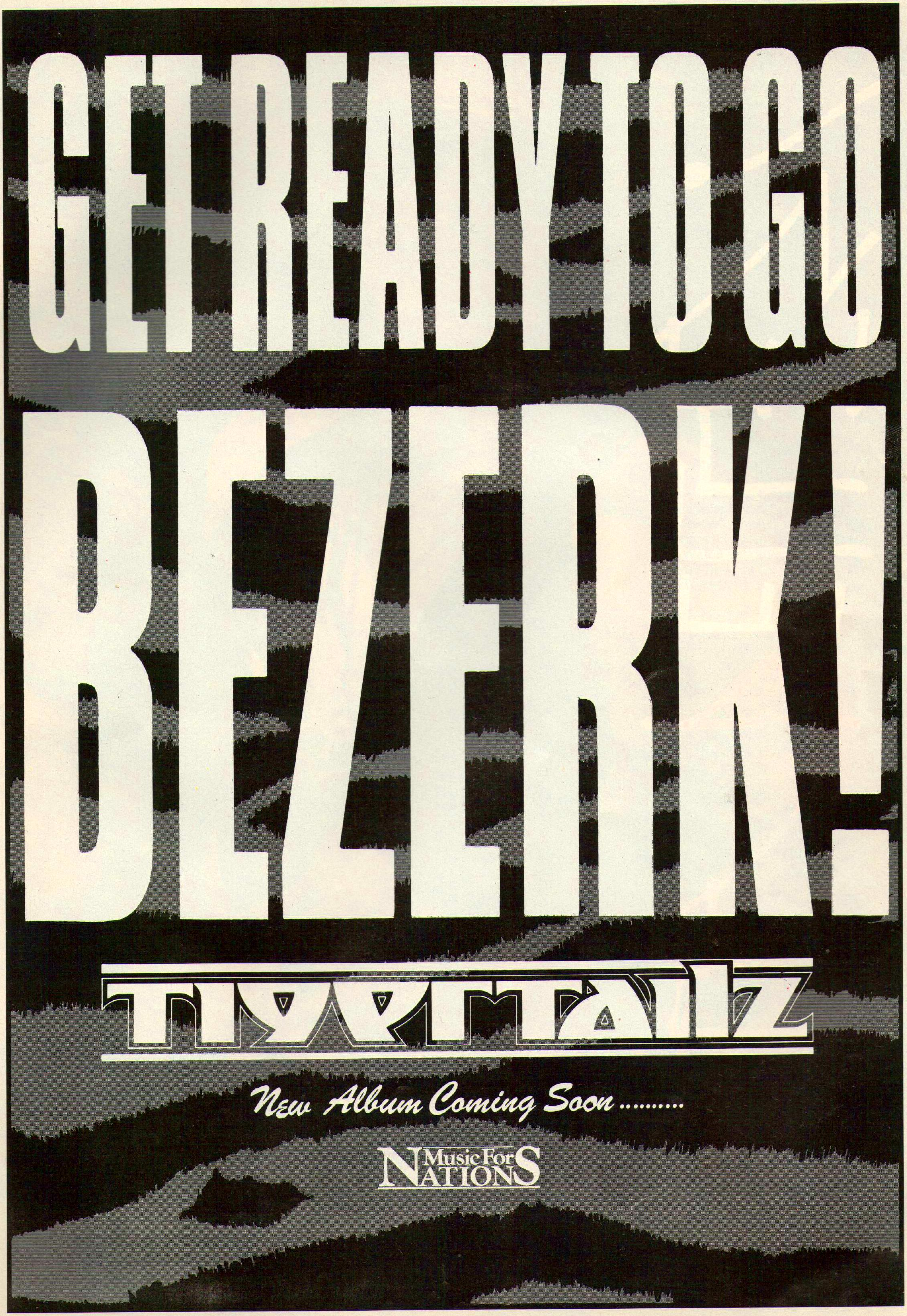
"Everyone was fighting for his own artistic freedom on those records, and that really came through in the grooves – that's what helped to make the records special.

"Although we all have regrets about things that we wish we'd done and that we wish had happened, at the end of the day the Sweet was still an internationally successful band and you really can't do any better than that."

"I VE BLOCKED out all negative thoughts," claims Andy, though I'm not convinced as to the truth of the statement, "otherwise I'd forever be walking around with a cloud hanging over my head!"

I think the man still feels he has something to prove with the Sweet, and with Mike Chapman back in contact with the band a reformation looks more than on the cards. And then maybe Andy Scott can give the public more to think about than a pair of silver platform boots.

And if that happened, then I know his mind would finally be set at rest!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Music For NATIONS

HELL'S BELLES!

THESE GIRLS look good. . .

These girls act bad. . .

Try grabbing one, and she'd probably kill you.

But what a way to die.

Meet the **Cycle Sluts From Hell. . .**

We found them in New York City, where the Cycle Sluts – that's band members **Venus Penis Crusher**, **Honey One Per-center**, **Queen Vixen** and **She Fire** – first got together on the notorious Lower East Side of town. . .

"We started meeting at the Lismore Lounge, on the Lower East," says Venus. "We got the name, got jackets, and started having Cycle Slut Thursday nights. . ."

"Everyone thought we were a band," continues Honey. "So we started playing, just doing covers, and right from the start, we were really popular. So we started writing our own material. . ."

I can imagine what the Cycle Sluts write songs about. . .

"We write," says Honey, "about murder, sex, drinking, and male castration. The simple things in life. . ."

"Guys are scared of us," says Venus. "We have four Slut Slaves who help us out on stage: **Lord Roadkill** and **Dude** on guitars, and the **Von Doom Brothers** rhythm section. It's a scream. . ."

Watch out guys. The Cycle Sluts From Hell are here.

To stay. . . **JON HOTTEN**

Pic Ray Palmer

IN THE PiNK.

Following the release of their ultimately ultimate Glam Death debut LP 'Welcome To Bop City', ultimately ultimate Swedish Godz KINGPIN (pictured left) have moved out to Los Angeles an' grabbed themselves a squeezin', teazin' Death Deck-dealin' contract with Relativity Records. DEREK 'Where Do I Stick My Max Factor?' OLIVER points his new navy blue mascara wand in the sexy, sultry an' (partially) shaved direction of bassist TIM TIM for a tale of strippers an' plastic trousers . . .

THEY STAND alone, right up there with the very cream of Glam.

Read my lips. Kingpin is the name. Sleazeball Glam is their game, and there's none who can do it better.

Eight months ago my life was incomplete. Glam Metal meant absolutely nothing to me except lots of make up and piss-poor musicians. Then, one afternoon, the phone rang. A friend of mine from Sweden thought I ought to check out a new band he'd discovered. They were hot, they were heavy and, according to his nervous English, they were Glam in a very big way. He knew I hated that scene but Kingpin were, so he assured me, in a different league altogether.

A week passed and then, not unexpectedly, a copy of the Kingpin album landed at my feet. Unbeknown to me, though, Alison Joy was already on the case. She'd innocently opened an overseas package two days before to find the garish cover of 'Welcome To Bop City' shining right into her face.

These guys could play, and they had an intensity that put them straight into the Aerosmith league. With a true guitar hero (that's Harry K. Cody) crankin' out tasty Yngwie stuff on top of rocket ride riffs, I could relate to 'em right away.

Stixx Galore's Tommy Lee-style pounding was always firmly on top of the beat, helping to drive Tim Tim's bass like a throbbing traction engine.

Then, of course, there was the mega-elastic vocalising of Zinny J. Zan, whose screaming tantrums make Steven Tyler sound like Bernard Manning with a sore throat.

The most important factor was, of course, that they didn't sound remotely Swedish. That, I suppose, was my chief relief – but the other refreshing aspect was that they wrote brilliant, catchy songs. No half-baked, ill-fitting riffs, just mainline melody with a brat pack attitude.

Yeah, once you've heard Kingpin you won't want to discover another new band ever again.

WITH THE scene set, Kingpin sent out their album with one primary intention: to achieve world domination in the shortest possible time span.

Their deal with CMM Records was specifically signed on the basis that it was a one off deal. The band were thus in the envious position of having quality product available for licensing to interested record companies in any other territory outside of Sweden. A neat ploy and one, as you'll find out later, that has worked out very much to their advantage.

Formed originally in 1986 by Tim and Harry, it wasn't until late 1987 that the band settled on drummer Stixx and vocalist Zinny J. Zan who was, I'm sure you'll remember, once a member of noted Swedish prototype Glamsters Easy Action.

With the line-up completed, the band tumbled into the recording studio and quickly polished off 'Welcome To Bop City' with producer Matt J. Olausson.

To date, and I find this absolutely amazing really, Kingpin have only ever played one live gig. That was in Stockholm, Sweden at the infamous Hard Rock Café. To say that they are still one of the world's best kept secrets must surely be something of a pitiful understatement.

An exploratory trip by Zinny and Stixx to Los Angeles in June last year produced some unexpected results. The lads delivered tapes of the '. . . Bop City' LP to various music biz lawyers, only to find that these usually sedate, three piece suited gentlemen were literally hopping with joy at the prospect of representing them. It was an intriguing scenario.

Within weeks of that visit the boys had ruffled enough feathers amongst the larger record companies to ensure that a significant deal could be achieved.

After that, it really boiled down to commitment. And on that score, one of the largest independent labels in North America, Relativity Records, beat all other competition to the post.

They inked a large deal with Kingpin on the basis that they would relocate the band from Sweden to Los Angeles, repackage, re-mix and re-release 'Welcome To Bop City' in the USA and, at the same time, put them in the studio with a name producer to record a new album.

So far, however, matters have been slow to develop to say the least.

"YEAH, I KNOW what you're trying to say," drawls bassist Tim Tim who has, on this occasion, been chosen as the band's spokesperson, "but I can assure you that it is a very serious record deal. Relativity went nuts about our album, and they are taking things slowly to make sure everything goes according to plan. One thing at a time and all that."

As yet, Tim does not have a definite release date set for the remixed version of the album. Tentative plans for an October release last year were scrapped, and March or early April is now becoming a more realistic proposition.

"It's been mildly frustrating," admits Tim, "but most things out here (he's phoning from LA) are so laid back that you begin to mellow out and not worry. It's been slow, but we can see that things are moving on the business side and it's just a question of time before we strike out in a big way."

How are you getting on in LA? I mean, it must be a whole different ball game to life in Stockholm?

"You've got to understand that the marketplace in Sweden just isn't big enough to support a band of our type. We'd have to starve there, but in America everyone wants to know about us and we haven't even played a single gig here yet."

Have you run into any problems with you image?

"Well, actually the answer is no. We've toned things down a little bit. Refined the style, is what I'm trying to say. But if you go to any club over here you get to meet some of the coolest looking people in the world. It's really inspiring, to tell you the truth."

So, no problems then?

"Well, that's not exactly true. The only real problems we've had concern the language barrier. Like, the other night we went out to the Scream Club and I said something in Swedish that I shouldn't have said about some guy to Zinny – but the last sentence came out in English and the guy I was talking about heard it. I f**ked up real bad, but he didn't get too nasty with me. I'm stupid like that sometimes."

THE BAND are living in a rented house in North Hollywood, the cost of which is being picked up by Relativity Records. They have also been given a home computer to play games on, a beat up Cadillac which barely works and a set of instructions to write some new songs.

"Yes, we've been thinking about that for some time now. Who knows, maybe we'll even get around to rehearsing. We've got some riffs still saved up that were left over from the first album, so I think we'll try to resurrect them before we try to write anything new."

What about the girls?

"Hmm, very nice, and there's lots of them too. We've run into some, er, interesting ones – like the girl in Denny's (the hamburger joint) who wanted to buy Zinny's trousers – he took them off and did the deal there and then.

"Oh, and I personally like the strippers. In fact, we went to a strip joint in Beverly Hills and some chick got mad at me 'cos I was a little drunk. I laid on my back in front of her and she poured a drink on my lap to cool me off, but it was okay because I was wearing these plastic trousers and it just ran off."

Cool or not, the boys have just run into their first serious problem. A band from San Francisco, also called Kingpin, have made it known through legal channels that they have the name copyrighted – and they are not about to give it up either. In fact the SF lot have previously filed four or five successful legal suits against other American bands with names only remotely similar to 'Kingpin'.

The odds are, then, that Kingpin will have to search for a new name.

We now have to put the telephone down on Tim. Due to international time zones, I must feed the hamster and go to bed. For Tim it is just the beginning of a brand new day of playful partying. I raise a glass and toast him and his band, for I know in my heart of hearts that they will be MAJOR contenders.

TOO MUCH TOO SOON

MICK WALL traces the career of the ill-fated NEW YORK DOLLS – probably the only famous Glam Rock band from the '70s never to have had a hit record of any kind

AND THEN, baby, came the fabulous New York Dolls!

Up until the Dolls came along in 1973, Glam rock was sharply divided between the artsy-fartsy fag-from-outer-space routines of reborn '60s hippies like David Bowie, Roxy Music and T Rex, and the shameless low-rent vaudeville of professional preeners like the Sweet, Gary Glitter and Alvin Stardust.

The trouble with the former category was that they took themselves so *seriously*, they were such *queens* about everything . . . To hear Marc Bolan or David Bowie talk in those days, you'd think their lyrics were nothing short of poetry and their music was made of moonbeams. All this while they daubed their cheeks with stars and sprinkled glitter in their hair.

You just knew these mamma-jammers would jump 10 feet into the air at the sight of his own shadow . . .

The chief problem with the latter category was that they were all such obvious dolts, you couldn't take them seriously at all.

I loved 'Ballroom Blitz' by the Sweet and 'Leader Of The Gang' by Gary Glitter, but never in a million B-sides was I ever tempted to buy one of their albums or hunt down a ticket for one of their gigs.

That wasn't what those acts were about. Their function was to brighten up that dreary hunka shit 'Top Of The Pops'; you didn't buy their singles to *listen* to them, you bought them for whacking on at parties and watching the girls start to wriggle.

They were the Carry On gang of Glam. Five years earlier they would gladly have worn kaftans on TV; five years later and they would have all spiked up their hair and snarled sweetly into the cameras. Fun but fake, space-face.

The only character with any real balls that traded under the name of Glam at that point was Alice Cooper. His 'School's Out' single and album in 1972 made everything else released that Summer seem either hopelessly po-faced or just plain silly . . .

But by the release of his follow-up album, 'Billion Dollar Babies', in 1973, and despite containing some of Alice's all-time classix like 'Elected', 'No More Mr Nice Guy' and 'Hello Hurray' (all the singles, in fact), the rot had already started to set in as Alice became less of a real monster and more a theatrical façade.

'Alice' had become a 'creation' and the feeling was already starting to spread that Glam Rock was just another prop for naughty old Alice to run his toy sword through.

Like all the others, he had succumbed to formula.

BUT THEN, baby, came the fabulous New York Dolls!

The Dolls were five teenage cases from New York whose only aim in life was to become full-time rock 'n' roll stars and getting paid, laid and loaded for doing it.

And why not? If they didn't get the job, some other mutha would . . .

Their music reflected their personalities – brash, vulgar, obnoxious rock 'n' roll played with all the sass and spiteful energy of blind stupid youth still too young and wrong-headed to even know the meaning of the word 'formula'.

There was David Johansen on lead vocals, who looked like Mick Jagger's ugly sister, the tart with the heart of coal; Johnny Thunders on lead guitar, who formed the band when he was 17 and effectively split it up by the time he was 21; Sylvain Sylvain on guitar and piano, highly underrated and doomed forever to walk in the shadow of Thunders; Arthur Kane on bass, over seven feet tall in his stack-heels and with the demeanor of a dangerous drunk who just happens to like wearing women's clothes; and the sullen and tight-lipped Jerry Nolan on drums, who replaced original Dolls drummer Billy Murcia, Johnny Thunders' best friend, who was found dead in a bath tub after OD-ing on a lethal combination of alcohol and Mandrax.

The band dedicated their first album, simply titled 'New York Dolls' and released in 1973, to Billy Doll.

But one listen to tracks on the album like 'Personality Crisis', 'Looking For A Kiss', 'Trash', 'Pills', or 'Jet Boy' and it was

DAVID JOHANSEN (left) with Johnny Thunders

***THUNDERS IN** pensive mood. . .*

THE DOLLS live in the 'Old Grey Whistle Test' studio

ARTHUR KANE: had the tops of his fingers sliced off by an insane girlfriend

obvious the dedication came out of respect, not repentance.

THE DOLLS were bad for good. I knew it the first time I ever saw them – on an ancient edition of the 'Old Grey Whistle Test'.

They *reeked* of badness . . . David Johansen was hysterical – full basket, tight buns, if you know what I mean girls, a white James Brown in drag. And Johnny Thunders obviously just did not give a f**k . . .

They were the original Young Dudes of the '70s, and for sheer spunk and spittle they out-gunned the whole town. By comparison, they made the Rolling Stones look like a bunch of crooning old ladies.

Later, I saw the Dolls play live at Bibas in London, and that, Doc, is when I got hooked. I knew it would mean trouble for me later, but stuff like this doesn't make it down the street every day – and even when it does it never stays pure for long once the record company money-lenders and the media wizards have got their sticky hands on it . . .

So what can a poor boy do? Stay indoors and wash my hair? Do I look like someone's big sister?

Just looking at pictures of the New York Dolls in magazines you always knew you were staring history right in the face. Just like you do these days when you see pictures of Guns N' Roses in various states of disrepair . . . always that delicious feeling that here is a band that might at any moment explode, or collapse, OD'd on EGO or something even WORSE!

Only for the Dolls it all took place a long, long time ago in a distant galaxy.

And though they would later be recognised as the chief influence for countless latter-day giants from the Sex Pistols and the Clash to Mötley Crüe and Guns N' Roses, back in 1973 the Dolls were looked on with undisguised contempt by the majority of the 'serious-minded', self-satisfied music business moguls of the time.

THE SMART money admitted the band had talent – maybe – but because the Dolls insisted on living out every rock 'n' roll fantasy their doomed and addled minds could conceive of to the full, they argued that a major investment in the band's future carried too much risk.

As a result, the New York Dolls became probably the only famous Glam rock band from the '70s never to have had a hit record of any kind.

But pandering to the neurotic whims of the music industry was never going to incite much interest from people like the New York Dolls. They were high-fliers who worked without a safety net.

Johnny Thunders nearly wound up in jail more than a few times. The most infamous occasion being when he took up with a 15-year-old supergroupie from LA called Sable Starr. Johnny said it was l-u-v, and took her home to New York with him.

Whereupon Sable's millionaire diamond merchant father went crazy and called the cops in to deal with the situation.

Jerry Nolan was forced to take time off the road in order to receive treatment for his heroin habit. Arthur Kane was another frequent visitor to the hospital, where he received treatment for alcoholism and for bodily damage received after having the tops of some of his fingers sliced off by an insane girlfriend who didn't want him to go out on the road any more.

EVENTUALLY, IN 1974, a second New York Dolls album appeared, the aptly titled 'Too Much, Too Soon'.

Problems with drugs, the police, girls, booze, their record company Mercury and each other all surrounded the making of what would be the last-ever Dolls album.

The title summed it all up: they'd hit the self-destruct button early and now there was no turning back.

The album was panned by the critics, who claimed the band were already burnt out with precious little left to offer but the ashes of an ill-fated talent.

But, as often happens, the critics were far too quick to point the finger.

Listening back now to tracks like 'Babylon', 'Who Are The Mystery Girls' and 'Puss 'N' Boots', I'd say that stuff has survived the passing of time a lot better than anything that Bolan or Alice Cooper or even Bowie released in 1974.

Back out on the road in America, however, the band were a pale shadow of their former selves. Johnny Thunders could still be relied on to throw up at intervals on stage, but it was plain their vociferous off stage habits had taken their inevitable toll.

The band were on the point of finally disintegrating when an Englishman, Malcolm McLaren, who would later become the Sex Pistols' svengali, stepped in with an offer to manage them. By this time no-one else would come near the Dolls with a barge-pole, and the band accepted McLaren's offer of help.

The first thing McLaren did was insist the band lose their now ragged Glam gear in favour of some truly offensive red leather jumpsuits McLaren had himself designed. He also suggested they drape Confederate flags over the amps in an esoteric attempt to introduce some sort of political consciousness into the band's wayward acutely apolitical stance.

The band were already too far gone, though, to make much sense of the desired effect McLaren seemed to be aiming for, and for the first time in their all too short career the band began to look desperate, ridiculous.

THE END came when Johnny Thunders and Jerry Nolan walked out on the band after a disastrous date in Florida and returned to New York where they later teamed up with former Television bass player Richard Hell and formed the Heartbreakers.

Johansen and Sylvain struggled on under the name of the New York Dolls for a while, picking up various temporary replacements, but without Thunders the Dolls had lost their focus, their soul, and the pair finally gave up the ghost, settling instead on trying to push Johansen as a solo artist. But that's another story . . .

The story of the New York Dolls was over before it really had a chance to begin. Like all the best dead teenage legends, in fact.

To this day, though, there still isn't a former New York Doll that's ever had anything approaching a hit record. Yet they remain, on a purely Glam level even, one of the all-time great outlaw rock 'n' roll bands, who sampled far too much, far too soon, then were asked to pay the price.

But, O Mabel, you shoulda bin with me back in '73 . . .

KOOL FOR KATZ

RAY ZELL lends a lug to the decadent debut demo from boilin' hot Bedford bad boyz FELINE GROOVE. He likes what he hears . . .

OKAY, LET'S not pussy-foot around.

These cheekily younger than young 'n' cheeky Jon 'Oh, So You're Reading My Dinosaur Book!' Hotten rapscallions bunged me a demo through the post. And I dug it, baby. I was hip to where these cats were livin'. I even thought their borderin' on tacky monicker, 'Feline Groove', was simply purr-fect.

'So Long Baby', the openin' track of the three samples on said demo, is all splendiferous swaggerin' rifferama and lives up to the raunch 'n' roll label Feline Groove claim they want sewn into their suitably stainded undergarments.

They prowl dangerously close to the Dogs (D'Amour) kennel, complete with infectious lazy harmony vocals, on 'I Will Be There'. But I s'pose it was 'Shake It' that really did it for moi. A rough 'n' ready-for-anything rocker, with vocals like Alice Cooper impersonatin' Spike of the Quire Boys, this 'un perhaps cat-scratches closer than the other cuts to my particular end of the alley.

And whaddaya know, before you could say "What the f**k are you doin' here?" vocalist, Marti, and lead guitarist, Guy, had left their home town of Bedford to fend for itself to pay the Zell a wee visit.

Guy: "We started off as the Cradlesnatchers a couple of years back, which was relatively the same line-up. But we split up somewhere along the way. . . everyone was gettin' pissed-off 'cos we weren't such good musicians then. Not that we're any good now. . . !"

Marti: "We sounded like the New York Dolls/Ramones. . . but now we're playin' what we wanted to play two years ago – 'cos we can do it now.

"Live, we're f**kin incredible! I mean, I'm pissed-off with bein' modest. I love this band. The biggest mistake I ever made was leavin' it for a while – but I think it was somethin' that had to be done for progression's sake. I crawled an' crawled to 'em to have me back. . . I still haven't grown the flesh back on me knees!

"Timin' wise, I can feel somethin' now that I couldn't feel with the Cradlesnatchers."

Guy: "We played with the Quire Boys back in '87 – I don't want people to think we're just a bunch of snotty kids who are copyin' the Dogs or somethin', I think there's a whole separate gap for us to fill.

"We're a pretty young band, and one of the reasons we're goin' to sound different to the bands we're gonna get compared to is our strange influences. Like me an' Marti listen to Dr Feelgood and the Stones. Danny, the other guitarist, has been listenin' to Aerosmith since he was 12! Our bassist Graham is really into Cheap Trick, and then we've got our drummer Charlie who swings from lush American stuff like Heart, to punkier stuff like the Lords Of The New Church.

"So we've got everythin' there, y'know. We didn't just discover rock 'n' roll after hearin' the Faster Pussycat album!"

The Feline Groove demo is available for £2.50 from: *Feline Groove, 4 Manor Close, Kempton, Bedford, MK42 7AA*. Make cheques/PO's payable to G. Griffin.

The FGs tell me – "Eight out of 10 mothers say their daughters prefer them!"

FELINE GROOVE: "We didn't just discover rock 'n' roll after hearing the Faster Pussycat album!"

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Pic Ross Halfin

TRIBUTE TO RAZZLE

An intimate look-back on the life of the legendary HANOI ROCKS drummer.
By RAY ZELL

"TOO FAST to live, too young to die'. Ha! Ain't ya gonna feel a berk with that tattooed on yer saggin' flesh when you're sittin' in a deckchair at the beach when yer 60?"

Razzle responds with a wry smile and raised eyebrow... which is all I'm awarded for my insolence.

A tribute to Razzle, *aka* Nick Dingley, son of Henry and Irene? Nah, this is a remembrance. Personal and totally selfish. And if you'd care to share in my indulgence... then I'd appreciate it very much. Thank you.

The first time I met Raz was around May 1981.

He'd recently joined Demon Preacher as drummer, a band featured regularly in a column I used to 'write' for the *Islington Gazette.*

They were playin' a gig in Brixton and the entourage had all met up beforehand at vocalist Nik Wade's (now Nik Fiend of Alien Sex Fiend) Highgate bedsit.

We all had short, punkish li'l hairstyles... but this Razzle apparition had more barnet substance than the rest of us put together – lookin' like an Apache Indian meets Johnny (Dolls period) Thunders!

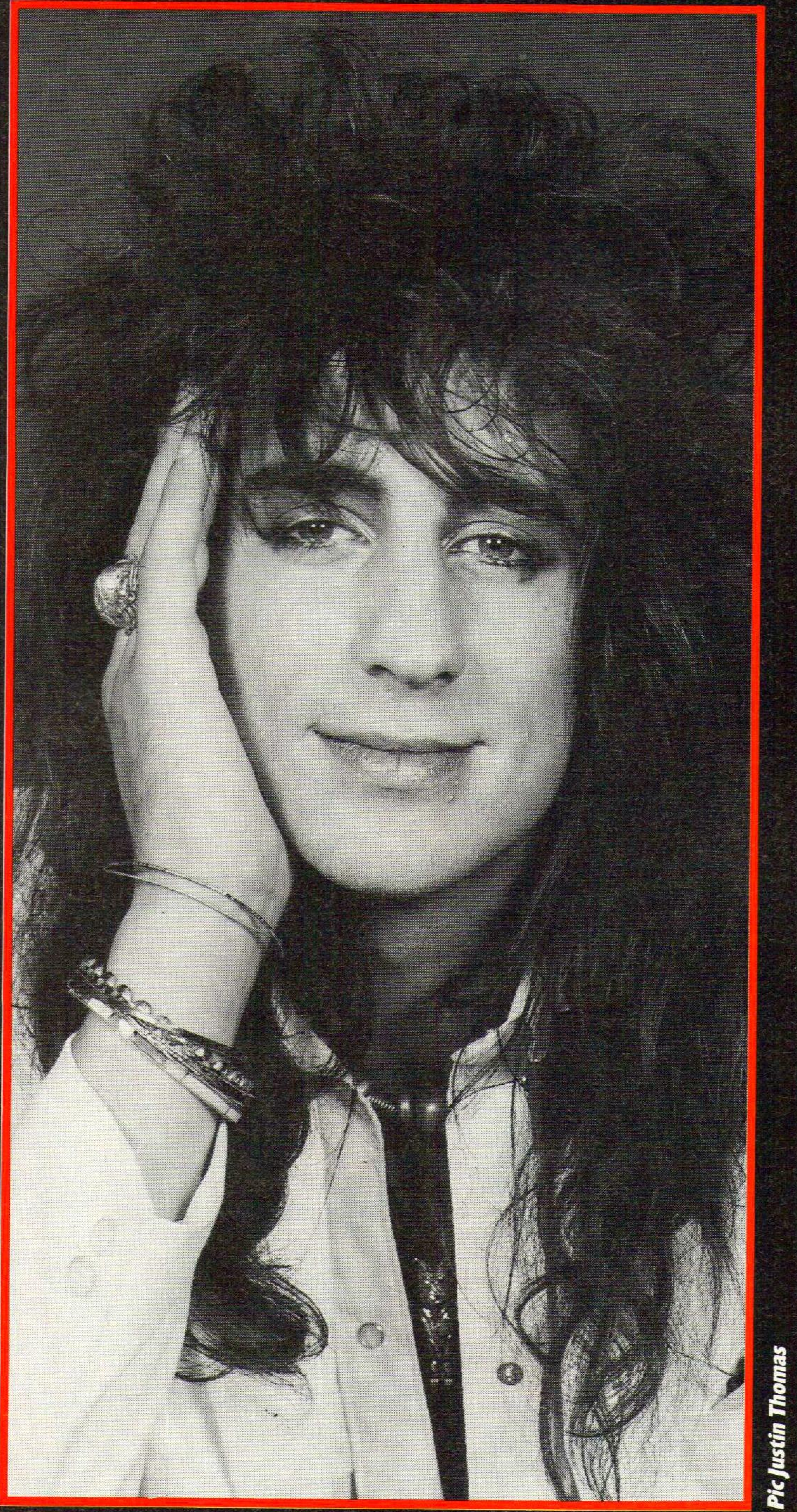
I remember thinkin' "You bastard!" and developed an instant scissor allergy...!

I observed this devious bugger, this totally adorable rogue with his motto of 'exploit the gullible', as he wormed his mates Jimbo and Boo, guitar and bass respectively, into Demon Preacher.

Like Raz, Jim 'n' Boo (who later formed the Babysitters) were 'Islanders', rock 'n' roll mercenaries from the fabled Isle Of Wight; and that cheeky-bugger-of-a-species stuck together through thick and thin!

I even remember the first time I entered Razzle's Muswell Hill domain followin' Nik Wade's weddin' reception. I was stunned as he flipped through his record collection... as it unfolded he, like my wee self, played the Sex Pistols alongside Van Halen! Until then I didn't know ANYONE who shared a love for David Lee an' the boys!

Then again, I also remember playin' Raz Mötley Crüe's 'Too Fast For Love'... and he thought it was shit.



Pic Justin Thomas

RAZZLE: he was one of rock's most charismatic figures

ONE OF THE endearing and indeed legendary attributes of Razzle – favourite frontman Alice Cooper, favourite drummer Rat Scabies – (apart from his wicked sense of toilet-humour!) was his infectious line in lingo, which some, perish forbid, actually mistook for true bleedin' Cockney!

Wimmin were affectionately referred to as 'Boilers' along with individual descriptions such as 'Dodgy', 'Pot', 'Crusty' and the term invented for vampiric Gothic femmes – 'Satanic Boilers'. An', natch, there was 'Hog' which was food, 'Ankle-biters' which were kids, 'Tread-Iron' which was bicycle, 'Wildebeast' which was Weetabix and 'Bunter' which meant fat.

In that first bitter Winter I knew Raz he literally hibernated under a ton of blankets in the Muswell Hill abode that he called 'home'.

He f**kin' hated the cold and lived for 'catchin' the rays' (sunbathin') in the Summer on his self-styled patio/extended window ledge, while violatin' the neighbourhood with Black Oak Arkansas.

He'd also frequently make the journey on his trusty tread-iron to my then family home in Tufnell Park and natter to me mum like a bleedin' ol' lady: "Oooh yeah," he'd say in his laid-back, sometimes almost gormless, manner, "I wanna settle down in a nice big 'ouse one day with a couple of ankle-biters."

And the alarmin' thing was... I'm pretty sure he was serious!

Then there was the afternoon at his place when he told me he'd ultimately like to join a band that had a New York Dolls image, yet had a 'heavier' musical approach.

"I'm goin' to be a big rock star," he said, somewhat deadpan.

Right, there's no substitute for arrogance, said the Zell.

Raz mimicked this line without actually sayin' the words out loud. Then smiled. Yeah, he liked that one.

RAZZLE, THE ex-boy scout, realised he'd probably never get to record anythin' with the rather un-hip for that time Pistols/Cooper assault of Demon Preacher and in early '82 opted (or copped out) for the drum-stool of Islington semi-punk band the Dark, who had an indie deal. Resultin' in, I believe, Razzle's first vinyl appearance on the Dark's 'Living End' EP recorded live at the 100 Club.

While in the Dark Raz graciously offered to play drums for a Glam/Trash tongue-in-anywhere 'project' called Marionette, at their first gig at the Pied Bull, Islington.

No rehearsals, an' trust ol' Raz to turn up mere seconds before they hit the stage, decked out in his finest colour unco-ordinated 'Glam' gear and the most hideous pair of black stack-heeled boots... which he actually played in!

The same week an interview with a certain *très* interestin' band from Finland appeared in *Sounds* and Johnny Thunders was annnounced to be playin' Islington's lamented Hope 'n' Anchor.

I tell ya, me an' Raz arranged to meet there at mid-day to get a jump on the crowds... no-one

Pic Justin Thomas

RAZZLE (left) with Sam Yaffa in Hanoi Rocks days

else turned up til about 6.30!

Actually, I do believe this was the same night Raz almost had a fight with some clown cos Raz had told him he was goin' to vote Conservative!

"Dammit," said Raz, "I wanna be rich one day. . . and votin' Labour ain't gonna do me any f**kin' favours!"

And a week or so later another ex-Doll, Sylvain Sylvain, played London's Dingwalls where we actually got to meet 'our hero' Johnny Thunders.

Raz demanded that he bought Johnny a drink and, believe it or not, children, even picked Thunders' fag-butt off the floor and later stuck it with pride in his scrapbook!

THAT NIGHT in June '82 turned out to be a fateful one, when Dave Veal (Marionette guitarist) and yours truly met the raven tressed ol' sod outside the ZigZag club in Great Western Road.

The bill was the Lords Of The New Church, some absolute bollocks called Crown Of Thorns, and openin' the proceedings. . . a certain Hanoi Rocks.

I remember vividly that, for most of Hanoi's set, me an' Dave were down the front with our only company bein' (who I didn't know at that time) various members of Silverwing, who I noticed were mouthin' the words to the songs no-one else knew. Curious though, the amount of Hanoi fans I've since met who announce, "Yeah, I was there – down the front!"

Ha! Anyways, wherever the hell it was that Razzle observed the Roxx from, he was watchin' with hungry eyes. I know he was hustlin' various band members afterwards, and he later told me he'd shared his modest view with guitarist/songwriter Andy McCoy on how he'd be a perfect drummer for the band in place of poor ol' Gyp Casino!

I know he had a sneaky rehearsal with Hanoi Rocks while they were still in London. But for a while our Raz was left on tenterhooks and he'd constantly phone the band at their hotel, to remind them of his existence, which finally led to rivvum guitarist Nasty Suicide tellin' him to f**k off!

"Gyp was my friend," Nasty told me recently, recollectin' the incident with a smile. "This English bastard was gettin' on my nerves!"

At the time though, Razzle was sick, he thought he'd blown it. And he needed this sooo bad.

But it seems dreams do come true for some Isle Of Wight punks. Razzle finally had what he considered he deserved. Of course he was *always* a 'rock star' . . . only now he was gettin' paid for it! He got to see the world, and had a flat in Holborn which he shared with Nasty. The scene of many a . . . er . . . tea party . . . !

Maybe of some interest was how Raz used to point to Heart's 'Gypsy Queen' elpee cover and consider Ann 'n' Nancy to be our perfect double date, what with my passion for black hair and his for blonde.

But even more curious, he told me he didn't expect to be in Hanoi Rocks forever: "I reckon I'll end up in an AOR stadium band like Heart," the man predicted of his own destiny.

Whereas in a reply to the final question on Razzle's fan-club personal details form: *'What do you hope to be doing in 10 years time?'* he simply wrote, *'Dead'*.

Wickedly prophetic, but that really was Razzle's sense of humour.

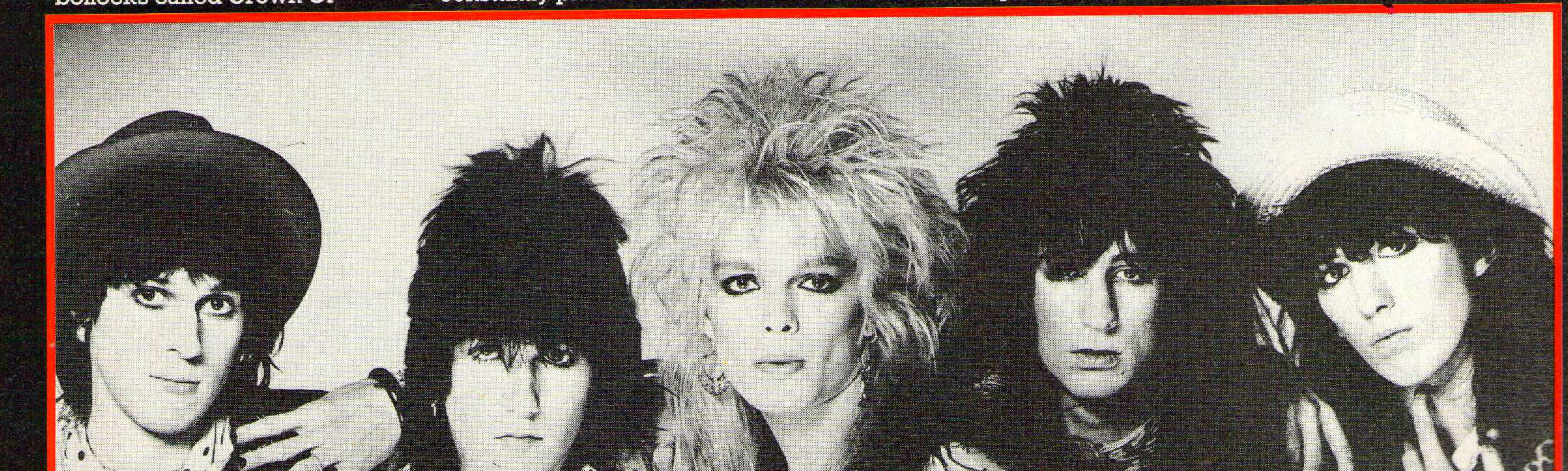
He was a great bloke, truly loved, and the car crash in LA that robbed him of his life robbed many of a dear and treasured friend, and the rock 'n' roll world of one of its most charismatic figures.

And if the celestial home where Razzle now resides truly is a better place. . . then it had better sell brown ale at the bar!

THE LAST message I received from the bugger was a New York postcard dated 3rd December, 1984;

'Having fun. Cold as hell here. But California sun next week.'

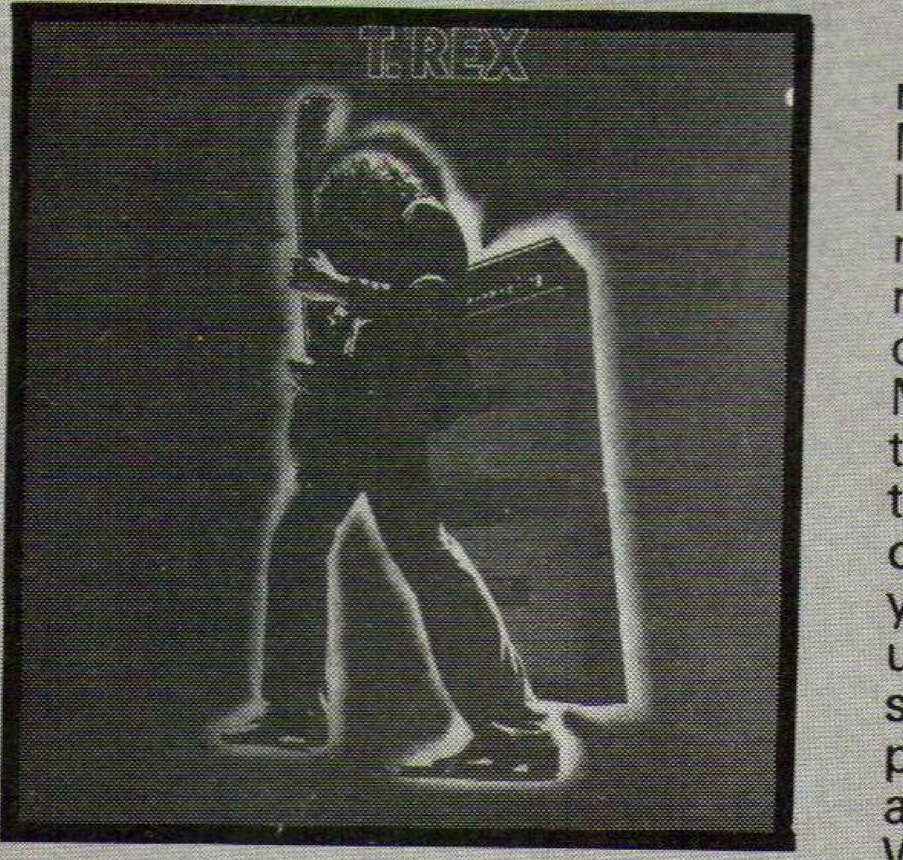
RAZZLE, DECEMBER 2, 1960 – DECEMBER 8, 1984.



HANOI ROCKS the band: dreams do come true for some Isle Of Wight punks. . .

THE TRASH TOP 10

A chronological collection of the 10 most influential Glam Rock albums of all time. Deliberations by dapper DEREK OLIVER



T REX
'Electric Warrior'
(Fly HIFLY 6)

BORN MARK Field in Hackney, East London, 1947, Bolan was to become possibly the first legit superstar of the Glam-infested '70s. His reign was supreme, his impish figure was plastered on bedroom walls from Aberdeen to Isleworth and every teenage conversation was peppered with dreams of ripping items of clothing from his body.

I too was smitten by Bolan's magic and 'Electic Warrior' was my first serious introduction to the world of loud guitars and long hair.

Tyrannosaurus Rex, the prototype band Bolan had masterminded in the late '60s whilst singing mainly about prophets, seers and sages over gentle acoustic guitars, soon gave way to the possibilities of performing with an electric band. His songs were changing too; shorter, snappier and more to the point, they were the perfect vehicles for pop superstardom.

However, it wasn't until the recruitment of percussionist Micky Finn (replacing Steve Took late in 1969), who met Bolan in, natuarally, a health food restaurant, that matters fully took on some kind of unique direction. Making his debut on the transitional 'Beard Of Stars' set, the two introduced electric guitar on several tracks. Less than two years later, following an unexpected Number Two hit single 'Ride A White Swan', T Rex proper were dominating the album charts with 'Electric Warrior', a brilliant record and one that still sends shivers up and down my crooked spine to this day.

By this time Bolan was, on the strength of his amazing charisma and effeminate looks, drawing an incredible reaction from T Rex's increasingly expanding audience, whipping up the kind of hysteria not seen on the UK mainland since the glory days of the Beatles. In fact, it's fair to say that Bolan was probably the father of teen hysteria as we know it, and frankly there has never been a more beliveable figurehead.

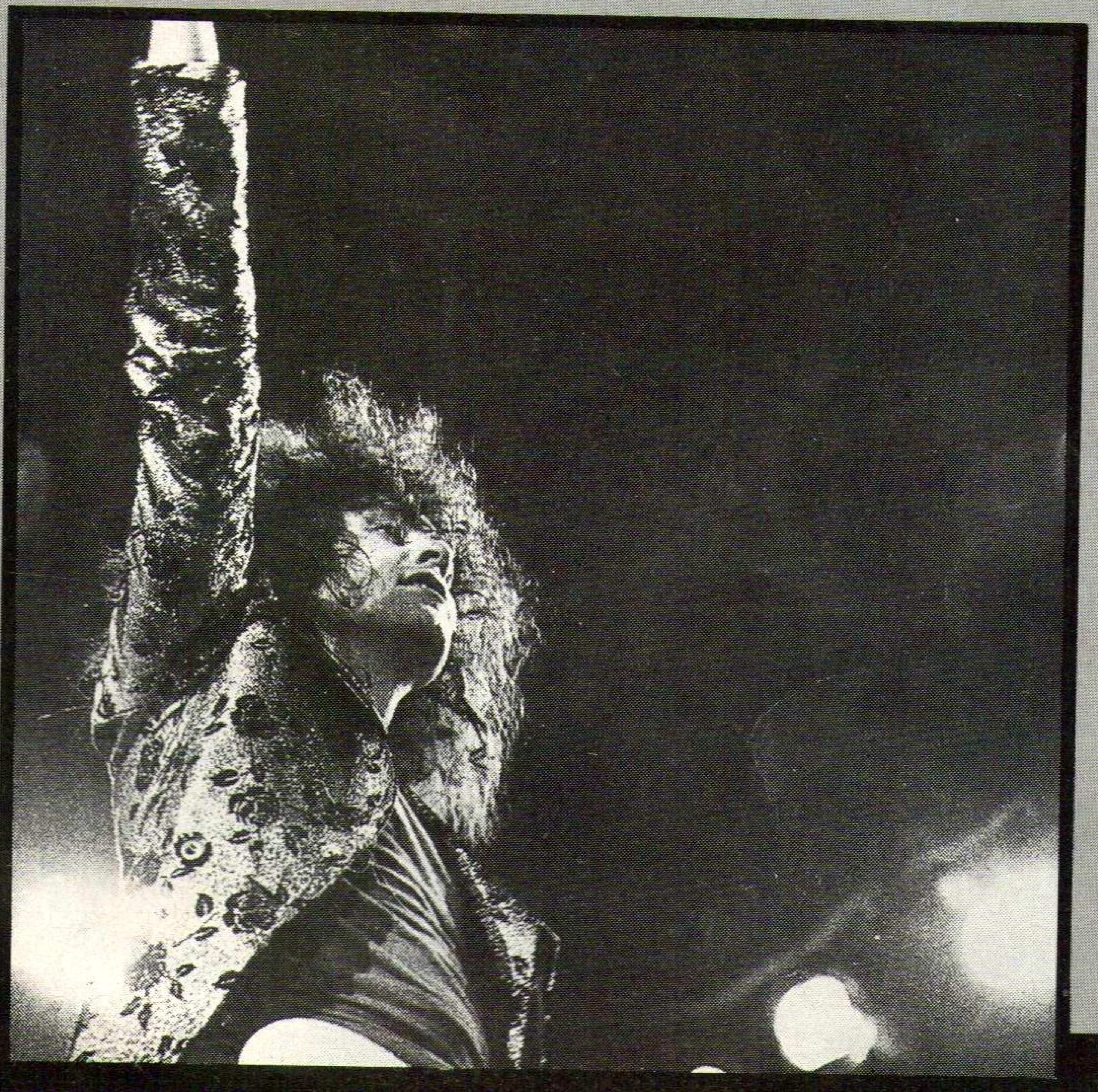
'Electric Warrior' completed the transition from gentle folkiness to full-tilt hard-edged rock 'n' roll, all glittered up and ready to go. Stunningly constructed, this album is a flawless collection of succinct pop songs exploding with unbridled passion and ballistic energy.

'Jeepster', another hit single (it reached Number Two), set the scene – a rumbling guitar-driven monolith with Bolan nonchalantly whispering the words as if he really didn't give a toss for the song itself. 'Get It On', (my favourite ever Bolan track) follows a similar pattern. In fact, this track later came the closest Bolan ever got to breaking the US singles charts, retitled for censorship reasons 'Bang A Gong'.

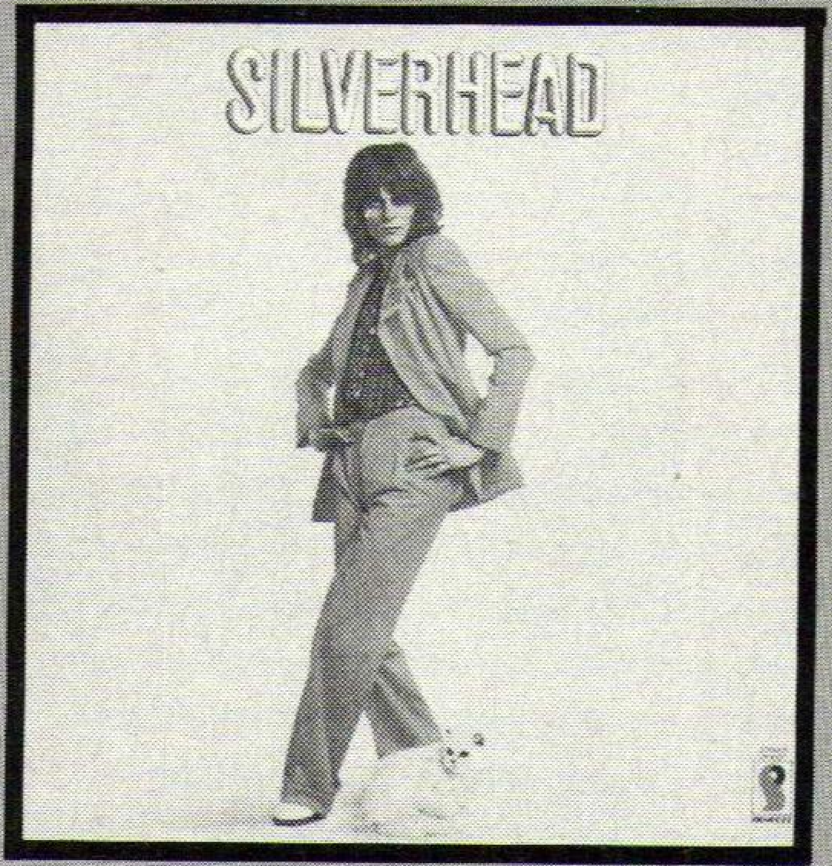
Bolan really was 'The Motivator' who ushered in a new era of super disposable pop. For him life was just a gas and we were little more than children of the revolution. But, like all shooting stars, he eventually faded. Bolan got fat, turned on his critics, released production-line pop lacking imagination, left his wife to take up residence with singer Gloria Jones and finally pronounced T Rex defunct.

He died on September 16, 1977 – killed in a road accident in a car driven by Jones – at precisely the moment he was beginning to redeem himself by way of an imaginative comeback. He was 30 years old.

Album released 1971.



MARC BOLAN: *amazing charisma and effeminate looks*



SILVERHEAD
'Silverhead'
(Purple Records TPSA 7506)

IN THEIR unique way Silverhead were essentially the most underrated rock band of the '70s. Their music was, in many respects, barely proficient but in singer Michael Des Barres they had a special, if not wholly unique, weapon.

Des Barres, an aristocratic ex-public school toy boy, should conceivably have been the most successful English Glam star of the '70s. Lady luck, however, felt the need to place that honour elsewhere – ostensibly, of course, on the glittery shoulders of Marc Bolan.

Silverhead, I suspect, mean nothing to you. They hardly made the history books and only a handful of journalists ever felt them worthy enough to put words of praise their way. It's only now that we can appreciate their real worth because, in their own crazy way, Silverhead were without doubt influential creatures on the formation and development of great rockers such as Kiss and Van Halen.

The story began in London circa 1971. Back then Des Barres was a struggling actor recently out of art school who won a bit part in the classic '60s flick 'To Sir With Love'.

However, the one thing that Des Barres most desired was to become a rock star, after all he had the enthusiasm, the attitude and, most important, the good looks.

Funnily enough, it was Andrew Lloyd Webber who backed Des Barres with sufficient readies to keep him out of mischief until a contract with Purple Records, the Polydor subsidiary formed by Deep Purple, had been signed. The scene was set, Des Barres was to be the Glam king of the day and it was simply a routine task of forming a backing band, making a record and watching the stardom escalate. So they thought.

'Silverhead' (produced by young upstart Martin Birch) is not a great rock record but it is a classic Glam statement. The idea appears to have been to fuse maximum tackiness (wacky backy lyrics and far out titles) with the serious crunch power of a proper hard rock band. Not surprisingly the idea once executed was pretty much a disaster but that, in its own natty manner, is just what makes the album so unique.

Des Barres' singing was the major plus factor. A great vocalist with a distinctive sneer and a neat line in pose, he gave it all he had and fired almost exclusively from the crotch. The opening cut, 'Long Legged Lisa', boasts an archetypal teen cream line in '*Long legged Lisa, all the boys used to tease her but now they just want to ball her*'. Des Barres, you can tell, loved the entire scenario and by the end of the second side, primarily on 'Rock 'n' Roll Band', he was revelling in his dream world with an ecstatic wide-eyed grin relating, in his lyrics, that he was the world's most desirable toy boy. No doubt he still believes he is.

Silverhead toured America extensively, suffered drastically from over-hype in the UK, were lambasted for their overt Glam image by humourless rock fans and were generally taken none too seriously by the rock media. Des Barres fell in love with America, particularly Los Angeles, and after recording another album, the equally rivetting '16 And Savaged', relocated and married a groupie called Miss Pamela. His dream fulfilled.

I'll not carp on about Silverhead's severe misgivings or the unjust manner in which, potentially, Britain's greatest ever band were treated. All I will say is that Michael Des Barres is, in my eyes, still the king of glitter. And hey, dig those trousers, dudes.

Album released 1972.

NEW YORK DOLLS
'New York Dolls'
(Mercury 6338 270)

THE NEW York Dolls were the first cool Americans, and that's all you really need to know. So far ahead of their own time, they still look positively shocking – despite the fact that they tumbled out of the NYC gutters some time in late 1973.

Stripped down to essentials – that's long ratted hair, low-slung fat-bodied guitars and fag outta the corner of mouth – the Dolls coughed up a particularly attractive blend of glitter and Glam, similar to Hanoi Rocks and the Dogs D'Amour. They attracted the attention of a Lou Reed-missing New York scuzz circuit and stole their wardrobe, in latter months, from both Marc Bolan and the Stones. Singer David Johansen, in particular, was a dead ringer for Mick Jagger, and guitarist Johnny Thunders was a member of the living dead, *à la* Keef.

They played great rock 'n' roll. They were hip to the trip and somehow they had the suss to reinterpret the attitude, rawness and audacity of the American late '60s garage scene into a full tilt sonic bombardment. Yet strangely, although they actually made two classic albums, they became a meaningless relic by the time the cultural importance of Glam Rock could be fully realised. In many respects the Dolls single handedly jump-started the American rock scene into life. Aerosmith and Ratt owe them more than just a cursory thanx on their LP sleeves, that's for sure.

A perfect case of the whole being greater than the sum, the Dolls were never really in this game to stick around for any long period of time. If they had, then I'm sure their meaning would have been utterly lost or completely misinterpreted. Importantly they urged members of their audience to form their own bands, an important side step and one much in common with the Punk rock explosion and, in particular, the latest London Glam scene.

It was club appreciation, an outrageous image and a small but select fanatical following that secured the Dolls a major label recording contract with Mercury Records.

Todd Rundgren, an unlikely collaborator, was given charge of producting their debut album and much to my surprise he managed to deliver a savage record with all their thrash and spit remaining relatively intact.

A major Glam classic, the album contains goofy but classic rock 'n' roll in the form of 'Vietnamese Baby', 'Trash', 'Pills', 'Jet Boy' and 'Subway Train'. Wonderful slices of poignant social comment put to the acid test by David Johansen's drugged up vocals and Johnny Thunders falling on to the studio floor with his guitar still switched on.

They cut a follow-up album, 'Too Much Too Soon', in 1974 but the lure of the needle and cut-throat business manoeuvres left them very high (but hardly dry). They crawled through it however eventually ending up being managed, in 1975, by a pre-Pistols Malcolm McLaren. But it was already far too late.

Since then Johansen, guitarist Sylvain Sylvain and the corpse-like Thunders have all gone on to carve out solo careers of some note and infamy.

Indicative of the times, Dolls music is still hugely popular amongst those in the know and their impact on the current resurgence of Glam Rock should not for one moment be underestimated.

Album released 1973.

SWEET
'Sweet Fanny Adams'
(RCA LPLI 5038)

INFINITELY POPULAR during their heyday, the Sweet went out on a limb to transfer their allegiance from silly pop to immaculately crafted Glam Rock. Sporting the Glammest of Glam images, huge stack heels and ghastly lipstick, they tore the very heart out of the British singles charts for the period 1970-1975. They produced something in the region of 10 Top 10 hit singles, including such seminal classics as 'Blockbuster', 'Hell Raiser', Ballroom Blitz' and 'Fox On The Run'.

At the root of this pre-pubescent success was the writing and production team of Chinn-Chapman, who formulated instantly disposable but hugely catchy songs. However, eager beavers quickly noted that the Sweet were in fact something substantially more than mere music industry puppets. The B-sides of the band's singles had harder edged aspirations featuring near Metal self-penned tracks pointing a firm finger in the direction of serious album acts such as Deep Purple and the Who.

Inevitably their bubblegum popularity began to peter out as the group attempted to change musical style. In 1974 they took a huge gamble by splitting with Chinn-Chapman, and releasing what can only be termed a true hard rock album. 'Sweet Fanny Adams' careered out of the speakers with one almighty roar conjuring instant arena rock comparisons and laying the foundations for seminal imposters like Tigertailz and Poison.

Not surprisingly the album was shunned by the rock cognoscenti and the band were caught between the sheets; on the one hand they were in danger of losing a loyal and rabid following, yet on the other hand there was the possibility of carving out a big future in the heavy rock market – the only ticket to long-term job security. By a succession of blunders and illogical setbacks the promised

breakthrough got screwed up big time, leaving the band wrestling with not only the musical direction but also with themselves.

'SFA' is now acknowledged as an essential Glam release. Powerful (mainly due to Phil Wainman's precise production) and full of unique instrumentalism, the songs straddle a thoughtful high wire between in-your-face Metal and sprightly pop rock. Best example must be the title track 'Sweet FA', a long heavy rocker with refined vocal harmonies and an engaging guitar solo from the underrated Andy Scott. 'Set Me Free' and 'No You Don't' manoeuvre around familiar Purple-esque riffing whilst 'Peppermint Twist' does appear to satisfy record company calls for at least one hit single.

On the evidence of this album alone, apart from their decidedly cool image, the Sweet deserved to be a huge rock group of platinum proportions but, as we know, that was never to be. They were particularly unlucky to lose a chance to play with the Who at Charlton football ground in 1974 after singer Brian Connolly was beaten up and punched in the throat, thus scuppering any chance of displaying to a solid rock audience that they really were a hugely happening rock band.

1988 saw various rumours and counter rumours that the band were once again to reform and attack the world with renewed vigour. Somehow methinks that scenario could do more harm than good. ***Album released 1974.***

JAPAN
'Obscure Alternatives'
(Ariola FA 4130981)

AN INSPIRED choice this once I feel, primarily because Japan to most folk will only be known for their new romantic pop period and the absurd latter-day solo antics of singer David Sylvian. Dig deeper into their past, however, and you'll find a prototype Glam Rock group of the finest vintage. If you don't believe me, then ask Geoff Barton!

Formed sometime in 1977 the band won a talent contest sponsored by the Hansa record label, a subsidiary of the German-controlled Ariola Records who subsequently signed them. At this point, however, the band were almost devoid of any image but talks between the label, management and mostly the group instigated a swift change of style. Thus, in January 1978, they stepped into the spotlight as regular Glam gods dressed in satins, glorious long hair and heavy make-up.

Their debut album, 'Adolescent Sex', as bravely titled as it was for the times, suffered drastically from recording nerves and a lack of real songwriting ability. However it did introduce the band in all its glitter-rock triumph, playing such 'Spiders From Mars'-influenced funk junk as 'Wish You Were Black' with some degree of nervousness and a certain naivete.

By the end of 1978, however, the band had focused their sound perfectly and had come up with something of a minor masterpiece with their second LP, 'Obscure Alternatives'. Sure, the album introduces more keyboards than some can handle in a Glam sound, but on reflection they weren't that obtrusive. Above everything it was still the chainsaw guitar of Rob Dean that made Japan a cracking and unique alternative.

With quirky digressions into reggae and funk, the band on occasion steered their well-oiled riff machine dangerously close to 'Black And Blue'-period Stones. That, on reflection, was the key to their strength and, er, tackiness. For the most part the songs are rather unmelodic, held together by loose guitar riffs and some particularly adroit drumming from Steve Jansen (David Sylvian's brother – a little known fact!).

At the heavier end of the spectrum, which I suppose is what concerns us most, are two prime hard rock cuts in 'Sometimes I Feel So Low' and 'Deviation'. The former suffers from a rude funk Metal injection but eventually the guitars start to dominate allowing David Sylvian's sneering vocals to reign supreme.

Despite being foisted on the Metal scene by Ariola as saving gods to a dying breed, the Metal kids couldn't even begin to understand where Japan were coming from, let alone lend a helping hand to support them. Instead they turned en masse and rejected them out of hand as major league faggots. A full UK tour supporting the Blue Öyster Cült virtually ended in disaster when every night the band were forced to quit playing mid-set at the request of the audience.

Then, in one of rock's most remarkable turnarounds, the band rose phoenix-like from humble beginnings and turned themselves into one of the most sophisticated art-rock-pose outfits in the pop world. As leaders of the New Romantic scene they coined it in on all fronts, becoming the darlings of *Smash Hits* and its ilk. Amazing.

Album released 1978.

KONTINUEZ OVER

TRASH

FROM PREVIOUZ PAGE

GIRL
'Sheer Greed'
(Jet Records LP 224)

WHILST PHIL Lewis is currently on the receiving end of a major dose of fame in his latest band LA Guns, most of us seem to have entirely forgotten his humble Glam Rock origins. Even Phil, bless his dyed black hair, seems to have conveniently veiled his roots lately, bypassing his vinyl debut with Girl in many an interview that I've recently chanced upon. We at *Kerrang!*, however, have a different story to tell.

Signed to Jet Records on the strength of just one cheaply filmed video, Girl were foisted on to the public as the latest Glam Rock rage. It was an enterprising move on all counts but try as they might the UK remained particularly reticent about supporting such an act and, almost from the moment they arrived to their dying days in 1982, Girl were given an extremely rough ride.

Despite rejection from the average rock fan, Girl did, however cause a minor sensation in the trend-setting world of music journalism. At the time, everyone, it seemed, could be found writing ream after ream of copy hailing Girl to be the biggest thing since, er, the New York Dolls!

It was a situation that became positively embarrassing by the time Girl had released their second album because I can remember audiences actively lobbing anything to hand at the band during concerts. Like Japan, they were fighting a losing battle but amongst a small fanatical following they couldn't be faulted.

'Sheer Greed' is a great record. I played it just this morning and spent most of the time scratching my head wondering why they didn't happen in a very big way. With an utterly wild delivery, the band, dressed like cheap tarts, cruise their way through a mildly ridiculous Fowley/Ezrin/Stanley patchwork of obscene rock 'n' roll with hooks aplenty and lots of melody too!

The album kicks off in blistering style with sonic guitar riffs on 'Hollywod Tease', a delightful song concerning boys on heat, stuff the likes of which hadn't been heard since the prime days of Kiss and Silverhead. And that's not all, because hold your breath for a moment and you'll soon bump into the very wonderful Cockney Rebelesque 'Lovely Lorraine', the lethal 'Little Miss Ann' and the classy cock rock of 'Doctor Doctor' with young Philip crooning at the top of his lungs, '*Help me make it through the night*'!

Flip the flimsy sucker over on its back and you've got a great cover version of perhaps the best Kiss track of all time, 'Do You Love Me', a difficult choice but Girl manage to keep its tacky street glamour in full working order. 'My Number' swaggers from the speakers atop a simple but effective riff from Phil Collen, with Lewis going ga ga in the vocal department.

Meanwhile, the final track 'Heartbreak America' closes proceedings by toasting the American lifestyle, something Lewis would eventually taste for real as a member of LA Guns.

'Sheer Greed' in the final analysis is one hell of an impressive debut album. Between their music and their make-up bags they come on strong, perhaps a little too confident, and they extinguished their own flame before it had time to flare up and make a devastating inferno. I have no hesitation in recommending that you check the bargain bins for a cheap copy immediately.

Album released 1980.

PHIL LEWIS of Girl: Jet Records signed the band on the strength of one dodgy video

MÖTLEY CRÜE
'Too Fast For Love'
(Leathür Records LR 123)

LIKE 'EM or loathe 'em, nobody can ignore them. From the moment they burst on to the scene playing small clubs in Los Angeles to the second they smashed the charts to smithereens with 'Shout At The Devil', Mötley Crüe have always delivered with 100 per cent commitment. For that alone they deserve a large slap on the back and a huge can of Sunsilk hairspray.

Wasted and degenerate, the Crüe's image, in league with their music, has been immensely influential in turning them into a mega Metal selling unit. Dressed in tattered leathers, their faces covered in bright make-up, the band spit out songs with lyrics that express explicit sexual innuendo, blatant intoxication and venomous hatred. Give me more! Give me more!

Right from the start Mötley Crüe was the brainchild of bassist Nikki Sixx – previously a member of a small going-nowhere group called London – who teamed up the other members of the band sometime in early 1981. All of the Crüe alongside Sixx had seen active duty in a variety of prototype Glam outfits with silly names such as Suite 19 (Tommy Lee) and Rock Candy (Vince Neil and Mick Mars).

Quick off the mark, they stormed the LA club circuit and then, in a calculated move, issued a limited edition single ('Stick To Your Guns'/'Toast Of The Town' – only 1,000 copies pressed) before putting their arses on the line by releasing a debut album 'Too Fast For Love' on their manager's label Leathür Records, early in 1982.

Self-produced, and packaged in a sparse black and white sleeve depicting, natch, a shot of Vince Neil's crotch, the album is, despite its low budget, generally regarded by Crüe fans as the best album they've ever recorded. Frantic and exciting, the production is cheap but incredibly cheerful, boasting in-your-face guitar riffs and a set of superb songs with Vince Neil's cry baby vocals hitting home like cupid's love arrows.

'Too Fast For Love' succeeded on all levels; it was loud, crude and sufficiently different to change the Los Angeles music scene virtually over night.

Of the 10 delicious tracks I'd place 'Live Wire', 'Public Enemy No 1', 'Take Me To The Top' and 'Piece Of Your Action', all conveniently located on Side One incidentally, as my personal all-time favoutite Crüe tracks – and there they are all on one record! Nobody produced the album as such, although their management Coffman And Coffman helped themselves to an executive production tag, but close examination of the sleeve credits reveals, in very small writing, that the mixing was undertaken by none other than Michael Wagener in what was probably one of his first ever jobs.

"I really wanted to recreate the punkish feel of the glitter era," Sixx once said in an early interview, going on to cite the Sweet, David Bowie, Slade and Mott The Hoople as his prime influences. And, as if to support those very words, the band eventually managed to push their way on to the West Coast leg of a Kiss tour in 1983, giving the headliners a run for their money if not blowing them entirely off stage.

Natch, it was only months before a major label stepped in to reap the benefits. Elektra were the lucky people who bagged 'em for a considerable sum and they had the 'TFFL' album remixed by Roy Thomas Baker, helping to make the original Leathür copies instant collectors' items. Not unexpectedly, the big budget remixed version is generally regarded as inferior. Dig it, dudes!

Album released 1982.

HANOI ROCKS
'Back To Mystery City'
(Lick Records LIC LP1)

THERE'S LITTLE doubt that a Hanoi Rocks album is an essential addition to any Glam Rock collection, but the question must surely be: which one? No problem. The answer is simply to buy every record they ever released!

Mind you, if I was severely pressurised into selecting just one album from their catalogue I'd have to go with 'Back To Mystery City' as it represents, in my feeble opinion, the culmination of everything they ever wanted to be and a whole lot more besides.

Sometime in 1982, or thereabouts, I travelled to Tooting Bec underground station to rendezvous with HR bassist Sam Yaffa. I was on my way to interview the band for the *Melody Maker* and Sam, laughing wildly all the way, showed me to the group's house. Hanoi at that point were just another new name to me but with three albums already under their belts, including the monumental 'Oriental Beat', together with a wildly self-destructive attitude, they were certainly big news with a select set of Glam fans already hailing them as the biggest thing since the New York Dolls.

The band were, of course, formed in Finland from the ashes of a particularly successful pop group called, rather amusingly, Pelle Miljoona. Before their move to Tooting, South London, they had released three wholesome albums ('Bangkok Rocks, Saigon Shakes' in 1980, 'Oriental Beat' in 1981, and 'Self Destruction Blues' in 1982) all on the obscure but happening Johanna label. They'd even scored a Number One hit single at home with the track 'Love's An Injection', but sensibly the band decided that if they were to grow and prosper then a move to the UK would be a prime requisite. After all, imports of their records were causing a considerable stir on the London night club scene.

By late '82 the band had arrived, and 'Back To Mystery City' was little more than a set of poorly recorded demos and a few imaginative ideas. However, with the addition of British drummer Razzle (Nicholas Dingley), the band got down to some serious rehearsing moulding guitarist Andy McCoy's songs into potent slices of prime Glam Rock.

'Back To Mystery City', for me, was Hanoi Rocks at their greatest. The emphasis was hot on sex, drugs and wild rock, and singer Michael Monroe, blond-haired and beautiful, had evolved into one of the greatest frontmen of our times. They cited influences as direct as Alice Cooper, the MC5 and the New York Dolls, yet they created a Metalbilly freak-out that will probably never be successfully emulated by any other group.

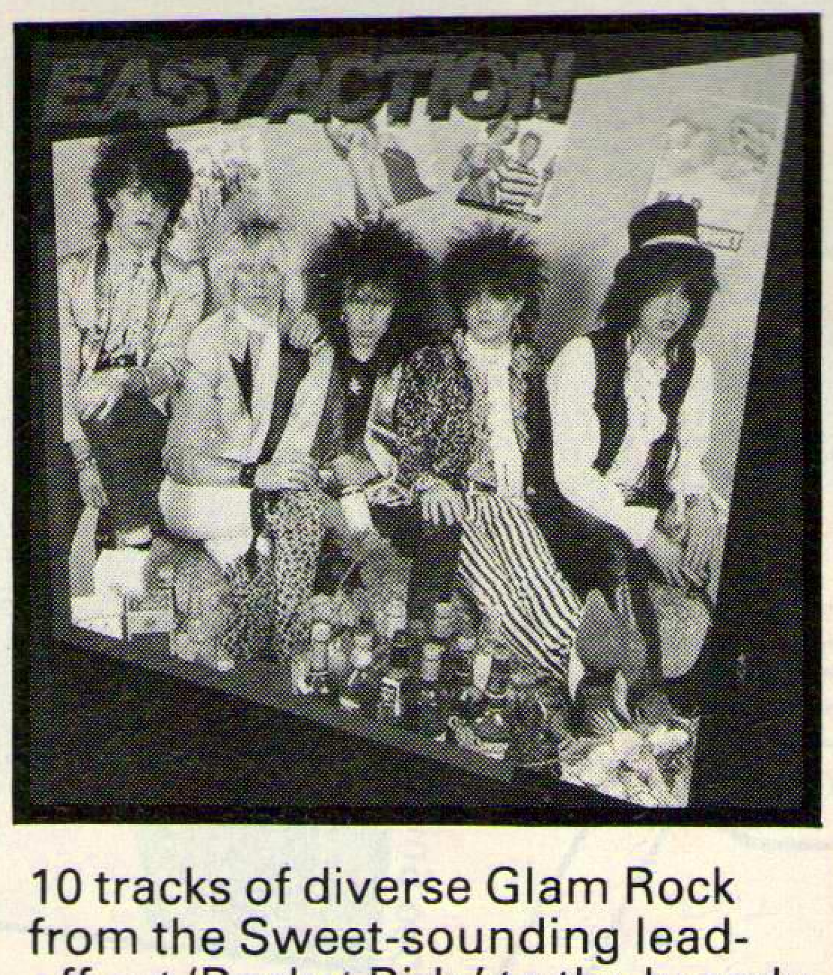
And let's not forget their sensational image. All beer, fags and make-up, with Razzle's top hat and McCoy's floppy, jet black sombrero seemingly glued to their heads. Monroe had the sex angle neatly sewn up whilst bassist Sam Yaffa (now in Jetboy) and second guitarist Nasty Suicide were Keef Richards lookalikes for sure.

They were massive in Japan, big in the UK, but meant f**k all in America. CBS jumped on their case in 1984, helping them to record the drastically ordinary 'Two Steps From The Move' LP, produced by Bob Ezrin, but by then everyone and his milkman who was hip to the trip had sensed that it was all over.

But 'Back To Mystery City' is authentic sleaze, dudes. Remember that.

Album released 1983.

EASY ACTION
'Easy Action'
(Tandan Records 007)



IT'S FAIR to say that most of the Glam bands featured in this round up are all well known mainly because of their outrageous attire, but Easy Action are probably the most obscure act on offer. Now, because you've never heard of them that doesn't automatically mean that they must be garbage. Far from it. Easy Action made one of the classic Glam rock albums of all time, the very reason why I've decided to feature them.

A five-piece originating from Sweden, the band first came to my attention in 1983 when they landed a contract with Tandan records, a small Swedish independent company, and relesed this, their debut album. A few months later, the band flew to London to make a promotional video and hang out in the London clubs where they made quite a stir, what with their outrageous glad rags being instantly compared to Hanoi Rocks, the darlings of the Glam set at that time.

I remember bumping into Zin Zan, their singer, and having a rather tricky conversation with him. His command of English was pretty limited to say the least and what he did have to say mostly concerned booze, fags, women and loud music. At the time I was mostly obsessed with obscure AOR bands and I remember thinking that myself and Easy Action didn't have an awful lot in common. Nevertheless I liked their record, thought their image was pretty ace and enjoyed the notion of them being able to give Hanoi Rocks a bit of gentle competition.

The following year Easy Action's album suddenly appeared in the UK on the WEA label. Expecting an upsurge in group activity, maybe even the chance of a few live gigs, I waited with bated breath, but to no avail. The album disappeared almost as soon as it was released and the band, so I heard through my network of trusty contacts, had already fragmented.

'Easy Action' is loose, raw and decidedly cool. Here you will find 10 tracks of diverse Glam Rock from the Sweet-sounding lead-off cut 'Rocket Ride' to the broody 'Mental Dance' resplendent with an intriguing but not too imaginative lead guitar solo courtesy of a young and very much innocent Kee Marcello.

Turn the record over and you'll certainly find a whole heap of Sweet rip-offs, particularly in 'Let's Lose Control', which are stolen for sure from the mega hit 'Blockbuster'. 'Number One' is to my surprise virtually a complete steal of 'Hellraiser' right down to the quirky drum roll and the natty *'We haven't a clue what to do'* backing vocals.

Recently there has been much attention surrounding the ongoing court case between Poison and Easy Action who filed a law suit claiming that Poison stole the main section the EA toon 'We Go Rockin'', turning it into their big hit 'I Want Action', located on Poison's debut album. As an impartial observer I can certainly hear what it is Easy Action are crowing on about.

So, Easy Action came and went without even playing a solitary gig outside of Sweden. In a big way I suppose that worked in their favour, pushing them into the realms of immortality.

Since then singer Zin Zan has gone on to join Kingpin (see feature elsewhere), guitarist Kee Marcello has teamed up with Europe and the rest of Easy Action actually recorded a follow-up LP in 1986 titled 'That Makes One' which, much to the delight of yours truly, showed them in a very different light altogether – one of an AOR nature!

Album released 1984.

POISON
'Look What The Cat Dragged In'
(Music For Nations MFN 69)

LOS ANGELES, early 1984. Inside the Rainbow Bar And Grill four beautiful young men prop up the bar discussing plans for the future. Already they have decided to grow their hair to ridiculous lengths, and make-up is top of their hot topics of conversation. They are called Poison and in less than two years time they will top the US charts with an album that will go down in rock history as one of the greatest Glam releases of all time.

Poison had relocated to LA from their home town of Harrisburg where they had worked the clubs under the name of Paris. Dubbed by locals as the Lipstick Killers they could barely play a competent note but what they did have was a generous attitude which suggested that, above all else, they would in their own way become something of a curiosity, if nothing else.

The first man on the block to take notice of the hullabaloo was none other than living legend Kim 'Runaways' Fowley who started to record a cheap album but gave up mid-way when they fell out with each other. Then, like preying vultures, label giants Atlantic Records swooped in and financed the recording of yet more tracks, but turned the band down preferring to sign Savatage instead! What buffoons!

By this time, of course, the band were ripe for success. They had studio experience, they had the songs and their image was second to none. They'd gone past the stage of selling out the Hollywood night clubs and it was this factor together with many others that made Enigma records sit up and negotiate a tough but fair deal.

Enigma got the album they wanted. It was cheap, tacky and it smoked with a baad attitude. Ric Browde, the then small-time producer, recorded the band rough and raw, hardly having time to instigate hours of painstaking layered vocals or guitar overdubs. It was a simple, tinny, ragged sound but it roared out of the speakers with the same kind of venom and chic that powered the debut Mötley Crüe album, making it a multi-platinum success.

The album spins into full power from the first track, 'Cry Tough', a dirty commercial pop rocker with an accompanying video which detailed the band's outrageous image perfectly. 'I Want Action' gives singer Bret Michaels the room to semi-rap whilst the band clatter around him like falling masonry. 'Play Dirty' is a shout-it-out milestone in the Kiss league but a thousand times more effective.

The most commercial song Poison have ever recorded commences Side Two. It's called 'Talk Dirty To Me' and alongside the stunning video it was this track that really pushed their album onwards and upwards to sales in excess of triple platinum. And the rest of the LP? Brilliant, natch, setting the standards of Glam Rock so low you can't even bend down to pick them up any more!

When the money rolled in, the trouble began. Album number two got off to a shaky start. All sorts of top notch producers were approached but in the final analysis the finished product, 'Open Up And Say . . . Ahh!', did not, despite its commercial success, satisfy those who went a bundle on 'Look What The Cat Dragged In'. Where indeed was Rick Browde when they needed him most? Who knows and, frankly, who cares any more?! Certainly not Mick Wall that's for sure.

Album released 1986.

GOTTA ADMIT, KIDS, CONTRARY TO WHAT'CHA MIGHT BELIEVE - I ACTUALLY PREFER MY MALE-TYPES ROUGH'N' READY AS OPPOSED TO PREENED'N' POUTIN'. YET AS ONE OF THE UN-MIRRORED WALLS IN MY BOUDOIR REVEALS... I DO HAVE A SNEAKIN' FANCY FOR ONE OR TWO
DEE-LICIOUS GAWDY'N' BAWDY- THERE'S NO TIME OF THE DAY I WOULDN'T FANCY A CUP OF DEE!
Bret Michaels (Poison)
Dee Snider (Twisted Sister)
WHAT'S YOUR POISON?... GUESS WHO MINE IS?
JUST MY SALT... NOTHIN' TO BE SNEEZED AT!
GOT MYSELF A CRYIN' TALKIN', SLEEPIN' WALKIN' - LIVIN' DOLL!
David Johansen (New York Dolls)
Jay Pepper (Tigertailz)
BLUE TAC

MEGA METAL KERRANG!

MÖTLEY CRÜE

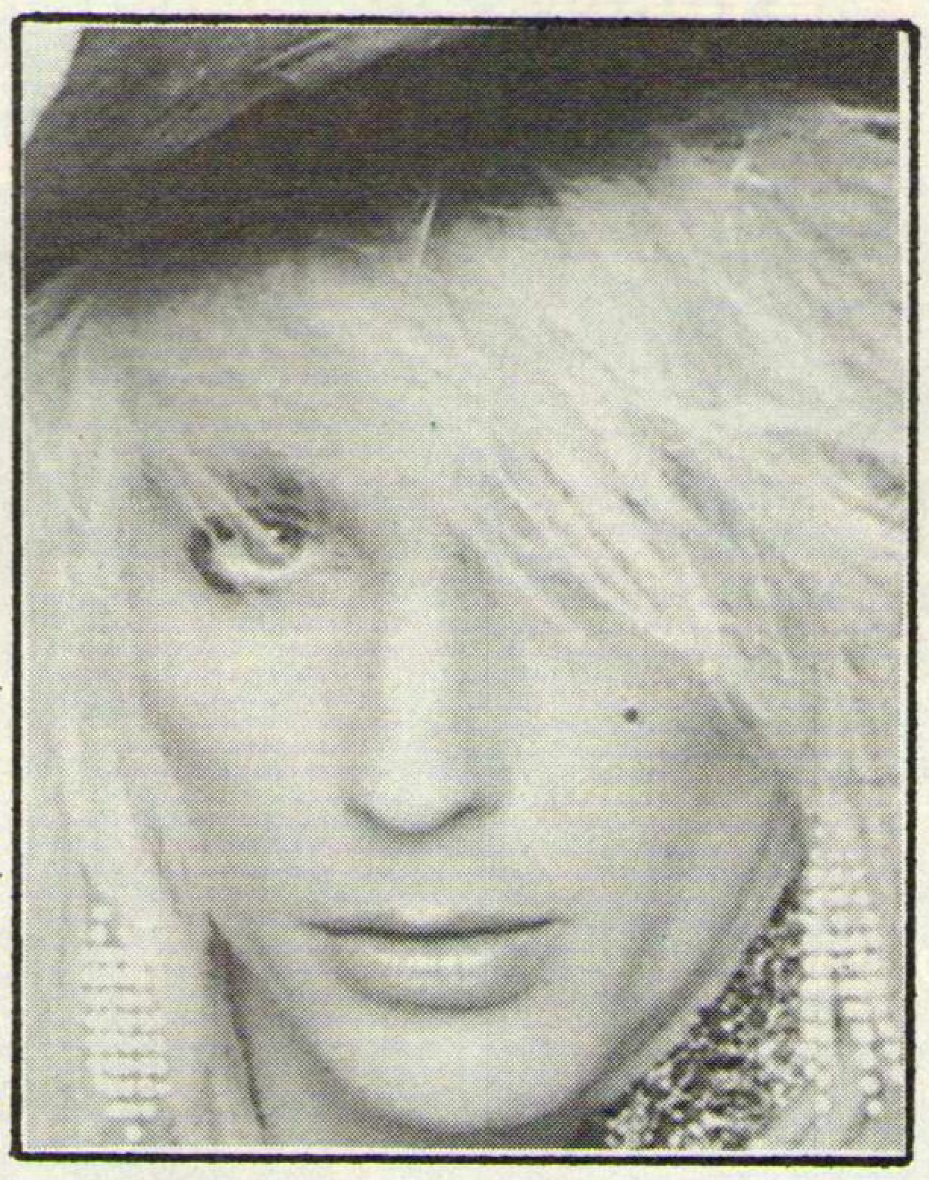
Pic Joe Giron

MEGA METAL
KERRANG!
GUNS N'ROSES

Pic Mark Weiss

LIPSTICK KILLERS!

Paul Stanley (Kiss)

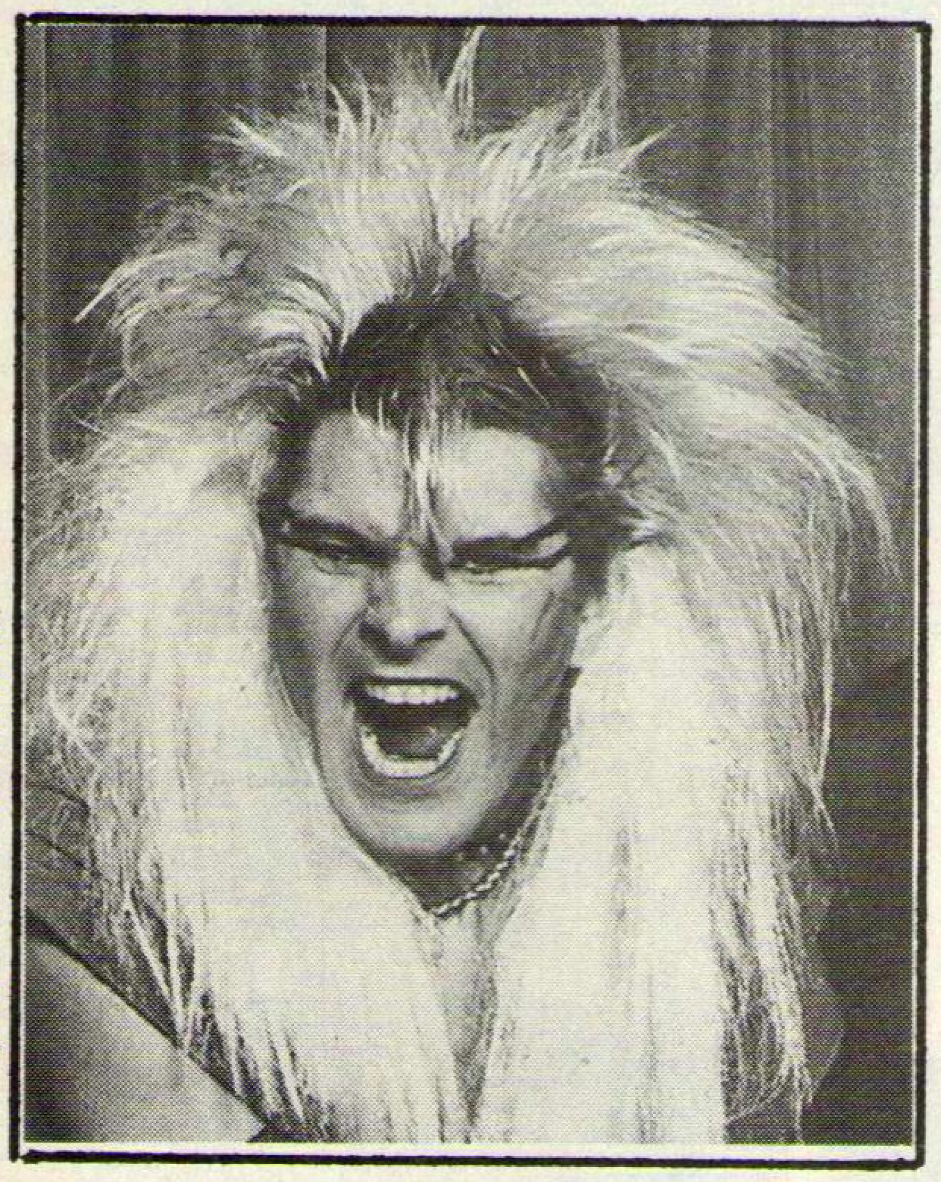

Steevi Jaimz (St Jaimz)

Sammi Curr (from 'Trick Or Treat' film)

THE WELCOME MAT ON HIS CHEST IS INVITATION ENOUGH... YEAH, I RECKON I COULD PULL STANLEY!

A LOVER OR A FIGHTER?...YA KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT SMALL MEN..!

IF EVER I WAS IN FOR A TREAT... THIS GUY COULD DEF-IN-ITELY DO THE TRICK!


Rocky Shades (Wrathchild)

Mike Monroe (Hanoi Rocks)

Alice Cooper

OOOH, IMAGINE BEIN' STUCK BETWEEN ROCKY AND A HARD PLACE..!

IF I TOLD HIS LADY FANS HOW MUCH HE ADORED ME ...DO YA THINK THEY'D BE HANOI'D?

NOT EXACTLY A 'LIPSTICK' KILLER...BUT AS A MASCARA THRILLER HE'S A PRETTY GHOUL GUY!

HUNGRY FOR HEAVEN

Seemingly, '70s American act ANGEL had everythin' goin' for 'em: a stunning image, a spectacular stage show and some superb Pomp/Metal songs. . . not to mention a guitarist name of PUNKY MEADOWS! So how come the band never really scaled the heights to mega-Godly success? DAVE REYNOLDS gets hip to the heavenly hype

IN 1976, ONE AMERICAN teen publication went so far as to suggest that glamour puss act Angel were perhaps 'the prettiest band of them all'! Only thing was, did the rest of America care?

This was the searing '70s, an era where Heavy Metal and hard rock was as much about image and character as the genre is today.

And in a way Angel were way ahead of their time, their well-groomed look far better known to the average kid in the street than their actual music.

Angel's records are, however, undiscovered classics. These days even second hand copies of their six albums are much sought-after by Glam fans and record collectors alike, commanding high prices as a result (you'll be lucky to find a copy of the quintet's second LP 'Helluva Band' for under £15 for instance).

So what was their magic? And why did they fail to break America wide open with their highly tuned songs and a stage show rivalled only by the flame-throwing antics of record company labelmates Kiss? Read on.

LIKE ALL GOOD rock 'n' roll bands, the Angel story begins way beyond the first album.

The band's foundations can actually be traced back to the late '60s in their birthplace of Washington DC where a young guitarist by the name of Edwin Lionel Meadows could be found bashing away in a variety of DC club bands playing British-influenced pop music and garbed in cheap imitations of all the best Carnaby Street fashions of the day.

Meadows became well known locally as a member of the best band of the bunch, the English Setters. As the scene became more acidic, so too did the band, changing their name to Cherry People and adopting as much Flower Power regalia as they could find, securing themselves a deal with Heritage Records along the way that resulted in the release of a couple of singles and an album.

Meadows, commonly known by his childhood nickname of Punky, seemed to be just along for the ride with Cherry People, for when the album came out his name was nowhere to be found amoungst the songwriting credits. Then again, only two tracks were written by actual band members, immediately bringing about suspicions that someone behind the scene was seemingly intent on turning the band into the next Monkees.

The LP crops up now and again in bargain bins, so it's not that much of a rare item to find. Whilst the music is complete garbage it's worth having just for the cover photos of the young, short-haired Meadows, who left soon after the album came out, in search of pastures new.

INITIALLY PUNKY hooked up with a jazz-influenced keyboard player from New Orleans, one Gregg Giuffria, but this initial liaison didn't last long. Punky returned to DC and immediately ran into Mickey Jones, a bass player, who invited him to join a band he was getting together called Daddy Warbucks (named after a character in the musical 'Annie').

Reaching a stable line up with the recruitment of Cherry People's drummer Rocky Issac, a singer called Ralph Morman and a second guitar player in

ANGEL: simply, a helluva band!

ANGEL ONSTAGE at California's Long Beach Arena, May 1978

James Newton, the band shortened its name to Bux and, over the next few years, they competed with the still viable force of Cherry People for the DC bar scene crown.

Around '73 or '74 Bux signed a deal with Capitol Records and recorded an album, but soon became aware that they'd fallen for the old 'tax loss' syndrome as the LP's release met delay after delay.

Somewhat pissed off with Capitol's attitude and also encountering problems with both management and Ralph Morman (later to record with Joe Perry and Savoy Brown), Meadows and Jones decided to split Bux up and start anew.

Since his brief liaison with Punky, Gregg Giuffria had been knocking around in a multitude of bands.

At one point he'd also found himself signed to Capitol with David And The Giants, a band that also featured Tommy Aldridge on drums.

Gregg Giuffria himself: "I think we had a few singles released and recorded an album, but I have no idea as to whether that was ever released."

Eventually Gregg got an offer from Punky and Mickey to move up to DC and put something far more worthwhile together. After messing around for a couple of months with an unidentified drummer, they came across a much more impressive dude in a bar one night when on the look out for a suitable vocalist.

Thus, Barry Brandt threw in his lot with the trio. Proving just how incestuous the DC scene was, it turns out that Brandt had joined Cherry People after Meadows had left and had also played in a pre-Bux band with Jones called Max. The singer of that outfit had been Boston-born Frank Dimino, who had already turned down this new DC supergroup in the making, claiming that they only had "three half-assed songs" to their name.

After much persuasion by Brandt, Frank finally did throw in his lot with the fledgling act – and it was to be a marriage made in heaven. Originally called Sweet Mama From Heaven, they quickly changed their name to Angel, named so in honour of the Jimi Hendrix song of the same monicker.

And so it came to pass, the music had come to earth.

IN THE HEADY days of 1974, it was (unlike today with rave press coverage of hot new bands everywhere you look) very had to attract interest. Hearts fluttered when David Krebs of Leber-Krebs management gave Angel a call, but all he was interested in was trying to procure Meadows and Jones for a revamped version of the New York Dolls. Needless to say, Angel interested him not one jot.

Then, one fateful night in 1975, a miracle happened. Angel had spent a good deal of time and money arranging a massive showcase gig at a club in DC, Bogeys, where many of the influential people in the A&R and management worlds were expected to be in attendance.

Ridiculous as it may seem, it took Kiss' Gene Simmons, at the gig on a rare night off from touring with 'the hottest band in the world', to recognise true talent when he saw it.

Legend has it that a 3am phone call to Casablanca Records president Neil Bogart secured the band a record deal. Management interest arrived soon after a gig in New York when David Joseph, one time manager of the New Seekers and overseeing the career of Donna Summer at the time, signed the band to his Toby Management organisation. Joseph was later to briefly manage Legs Diamond and also the original incarnation of Quiet Riot.

Thus, with record label and management backing, Angel undertook a short club tour before relocating to Hollywood to record their first album at Wally Heider's studios.

Casablanca had decided to bring in the production team of Derek Lawrence and Big Jim Sullivan. The former had made his name working on Deep Purple albums, whilst the latter was a guitarist with cult act Tiger.

It's been recognised that this production team could've possibly done a better job, but for my money the resulting LP is a sheer delight

Released in October 1975, 'Angel' is a glorious dosage of progressive Pomp Metal, a mish mash of Deep Purple, Yes and even Genesis influences.

From the majesty of opener 'Tower', the LP swings through a variety of styles that range from the outrageously gothic pomp of

GREGG GIUFFRIA with Farrah Fawcett-style hairdo: is this man a Charlie's Angel?

KONTINUEZ OVER

HEAVEN

FROM PREVIOUZ PAGE

'Long Time' to an early attempt at party rock with 'Rock 'N' Rollers'.

Contrary to popular belief, the infamous 'all white' Angelic image didn't rear its graceful head until after the debut LP had been released.

Gene Simmons: "When I discovered them they were just wearing T-shirts and jeans. The entire white look was the record label's idea."

It was an idea that, whilst greeted with relish by the band at first, they lived to loathe as the press continually compared them with Kiss. Kiss were evil simply because they wore black and chrome gear. Weren't Angel the exact opposite? As it was, Angel enjoyed an on-tour reputation that was hardly cherubic!

1976 AND '77 WERE golden periods financially for Casablanca. Spurred on by hit singles and albums from Kiss and Donna Summer, the company ploughed heaps of money into attempting a breakthrough for Angel.

The quintet toured throughout a good portion of the year, as well as releasing their second album, aptly titled 'Helluva Band'.

While the LP was certainly heavier and more rock-oriented than the debut, it lacked the cohesiveness that made the first record so special.

There are still some great moments captured, again by the Lawrence/Sullivan production team, one track even outclassing ANYTHING on 'Angel' all on its lonesome.

But simply, 'The Fortune' is Angel's finest-ever moment on record. Giuffria cracks open the bottle with one of the most haunting, spine-tingling keyboard/synth arrangements ever put to tape. It's always baffled me why utter donkeys like Jon Lord or David Bryan are hailed as brilliant keyboard players when a man like Gregg Giuffria gets completely ignored.

'The Fortune' also features a consummate performance from Frank Dimino, who plays the part of a condemned man awaiting the gallows so brilliantly. He may have had a talking voice like the Godfather, but his singing voice was truly celestial.

With gems like 'The Fortune' allied to the likes of 'Dr Ice', the HM-edged 'Mirrors' and the emotional ballad 'Feelings', was it any wonder that, at the close of 1976, Angel found themselves voted 'Best New Band' by *Circus* magazine's readers ahead of Heart and Boston? (Bear in mind Boston's debut was released that year, along with the hit single 'More Than A Feeling'.)

THE ANGEL stageshow, together with giant holographic logo which would 'speak' to the audience halfway through the band's set

As a result of Angel's new found status, was it any real surprise for the band to learn that Capitol Records suddenly decided to cash in by releasing the long lost Bux LP 'We Come To Play'?

Confusion has always surrounded its release, especially as to whether Meadows or Jones had actually appeared on the thing, but as Punky told me a couple of years ago: "They left a lot of my guitar off in the mix, and neither Mickey nor I appear on the cover. I was really angry when that album came out, but there was nothing we could do to stop its release. It really was nothing more than a cash in."

MANY PEOPLE expected BIG things from Angel in 1977, as the boyz went back into the studio for the recording of their third album. But, oh boy, was it one helluva disappointment!

Due to the success of Kiss' 'Alive!' and 'Rock 'N' Roll Over' albums, Casablanca secured the services of producer Eddier Kramer in the obvious hope that having his name on an Angel LP would increase sales and pull a hit or two out of the hat at the same time, as had seemingly happened with Kiss.

What they failed to realise was that Kiss were on a roll at the time, in those days they were untouchable and, had they released an LP full of buffalo farts (in-joke for astute Kiss fans), it would've still sold by the millions, regardless of who was producing.

Also, Kramer has never been particularly good at getting a good drum sound (ask Anthrax!) and the results on what became known as 'On Earth As It Is In Heaven' are pretty diabolical. The drums seem to smother everything else in the mix.

Then again, the songs on the LP weren't exactly brilliant. In an attempt to put together that all-important first hit, the group had all but lost their marvellous Pomp Metal roots and were now attempting to make a living from poking at radio rock/pop.

The stand-out toons on 'On Earth . . .' were obviously those that the listener could relate to earlier material, and to this end 'Cast The First Stone' and 'Just A Dream' fitted the bill perfectly.

The former is a very Dio-like Rainbow-era Metal work out, whilst the latter retained the haunting keyboard-dominated sound patented by Giuffria.

Of the other songs, 'Can You Feel It' and 'On The Rooks' were both heavy enough to retain the Metal following, whilst the rather guitar heavy 'White Lightning' was simply a case of Punky sticking two nasty fingers up at Capitol as the song was an old Bux tune that was on the LP that he felt needed to be recorded again the RIGHT way.

THE ELUSIVE hit single failed to arrive. Hardly surprising. If Casablanca had seriously thought 'That Magic Touch' had any chance of becoming a hit then they were true morons. As it was, the only really worthwhile thing to come from the release of 'On Earth . . .' was the introduction of Angel's now famous 'upside down' logo, to complement their equally well-known 'head' logo.

Prior to the album's release, Angel had ventured abroad for the very first time over to Japan for a series of sold out shows.

Attracted by their looks and image, the Japs took to Angel

'HELLUVA BAND': album number two, containing a track entitled 'The Fortune' – probably Angel's finest-ever moment on record

immediately, the only other nation outside North America who were ever to witness the Angel live spectacle.

In celebration of the tour, a special gatefold edition of 'On Earth . . .' was released in Japan featuring a fantastic live shot in its centrefold.

It's around this point in the story that things begin to get interesting. About five years ago a document came into my possession that takes the form of a 'groupie' diary, kept by dedicated female followers of the group from mid '76 to late '78.

It gives the reader an amazing insight into the band's career at the time and gives a few snippets of rather useful info and assorted trivia (ie: Punky was married at the time with a young son named Jordan).

In June '77 news filtered through that Mickey Jones had been fired. Details soon began to emerge that the bassist just wasn't pulling his weight. During the recording of 'On Earth . . .' it was, in fact, Punky who had played the bass tracks and Eddie Kramer couldn't believe how they could just carry Jones along when he was doing nothing but becoming a burden. Gregg takes up the story:

"Mickey Jones was fired because he was so inadequate in everything. We felt we had to act fast because we had a tour coming up, so a friend and I went up to Santa Barbara to check out some bands and, as a result, we found just the guy we were looking for in Felix Robinson."

Frederick 'Felix' Robinson was born in St Louis but ended up playing in a jazz rock band in California known as the World. Whilst he had a pretty varied career prior to teaming up with Angel, no infomation has come to light as to whether he'd done any previous recording.

"Felix was a really good player," recalls Gregg. "And he was a really strange guy! Give him a subject and he'll tell you a joke about it. Also, he knows almost every song ever written and he'll play it to you on any instrument you give him!"

Jones, meanwhile, was taking his departure from Angel badly, slapping a law suit on the band and even resorting to calling Robinson every once in a while to warn him about the rest of the band!

Shortly after leaving Angel, Mickey put together a band called Empire that also featured Pete Valentino (later to join Cheap Trick as Pete Comita) and one Steve Riley on drums.

Riley was a native of the Mid-West and had recorded with Roadmaster before allegedly getting a call from Angel to replace Barry Brandt. Brandt, however, never left the white ones, so Riley was out of a job. He was later to find fame and fortune drumming with B'zz, W.A.S.P. and, more recently, LA Guns.

Mickey Jones never did get back into the public eye. Last heard of, he had a group called Magazine together, presumably not alongside Howard Devoto.

***ANGEL VOCALIST** Frank Dimino: currently living in Tokyo*

***AN ANGELIC** entrance: at the beginning of a show, band members would appear seemingly from nowhere inside individual plexi-glass cabinets*

WITH ROBINSON comfortably in tow, Angel toured the States non-stop through 1977 up until October when they took time off to begin work on the fourth record, 'White Hot'. They still weren't big time, but Casablanca were still pushing the money forward as the group started to build a small cult teen following thanks to *16 Magazine* 'discovering' them. Would the new look glamour pussies look make a killing in '78?

The true meaning of the word 'Angel' is defined as '*a divine messenger of neither one nor the other sex*'. And this was exactly the look Angel were portraying more and more.

Top fashion designers were brought in to clothe the band in their wildest costumes yet, Punky Meadows secured an endorsement deal from an American hairspray company and the Avon lady called at Casablanca far more frequently than usual.

The marketing division was put on overdrive and a Kiss Army-style fan club evolved, known as the Angel Earth Force. Nothing could stop Angel from world domination now, surely?

Some see this as Angel's finest period. I'm not so sure. Whilst live they delivered in no uncertain terms, the material penned was ridiculously commercial – almost to the point of pure, bubblegum tackiness. But at least it was delivered with character, and well produced to boot.

'White Hot' saw the arrival of Eddie Leorietti into the driving seat, and he has to be given credit for giving the boys a far glossier sound, typical of that West Coast Pepsi Cola style that emerged in the late '70s.

On the subject of 'White Hot', Mr Giuffria had this to say: "The musical direction change was all to do with Casablanca. They were forever telling us what to do from day one, and in desperation we started to write this Pop Metal stuff, or what WE thought was Pop Metal – and that was the Beatles influenced stuff, like 'Flying On Broken Wings', that appeared on the 'White Hot' LP".

By now it was obvious that

KONTINUEZ OVER

HEAVEN

FROM PREVIOUZ PAGE

Casablanca were seriously beginning to shit themselves, because they could sell all manner of dodgy disco product yet fall flat on their faces when it came to a theatrical rock band from Washington DC. 'White Hot' came out in January 1978, and was preceded by a single, 'The Winter Song', that was an attempt to cash in on the Christmas market.

Angel got as far as a TV slot on 'American Bandstand' with it. Recorded with the aid of the California Boys Choir, the song was actually a little gem of slush proportions. Whilst the song failed to warm the Winter hearts of the American public, it became a minor hit in Japan and Germany. Trivia freaks may like to know that a different version, retitled 'The Christmas Song', was released as a promo to radio stations.

WHILE I DON'T feel Angel's new direction was the pinnacle of their career, it has to be said that no other band has ever been able to match the high standard of Pop Metal set from this period to the end of the act's lifespan.

Opening up with 'Don't Leave Me Lonely', a tale of the infatuation Dimino has for the leading lady in a movie, 'White Hot' sweeps through power-packed sweetness like 'Ain't Gonna Eat Out My Heart Anymore' (a cover of the Rascals' '60s hit), 'Hold Me Squeeze Me', 'Under Suspicion' (a moody piece set to some Bonham-style drumming from Brandt), 'Got Love If You Want It' and that aforementioned Beatles-influenced ditty 'Flying With Broken Wings'.

Angel went out on tour almost immediately, staying out right up until Christmas on a varied bunch of headline and support shows to the likes of Styx.

Anyone who ever saw Angel live, particularly if it was a bill-topping gig, will tell you that they put one one hell of a spectacle.

With the aid of top illusionist Johnny Gaughn, the band would appear seemingly from nowhere inside individual plexi glass cabinets, a hologram of their 'head' logo would 'speak' to the crowd mid-show, and, at the climax of the night's performance, the band would disappear into a rising curtain one after the other.

And because they were so popular live, the band wanted to give their fans a live LP, maybe in the hope that it would do for their ailing career what the first Kiss live album did.

ANGEL CAKE: Punky Meadows eats to the beat. . .

As usual, Casablanca had other ideas. Extremely disappointed with the sales of 'White Hot', the company felt the band needed to have another bash at new material in an effort to find success chartwise rather than release a live album.

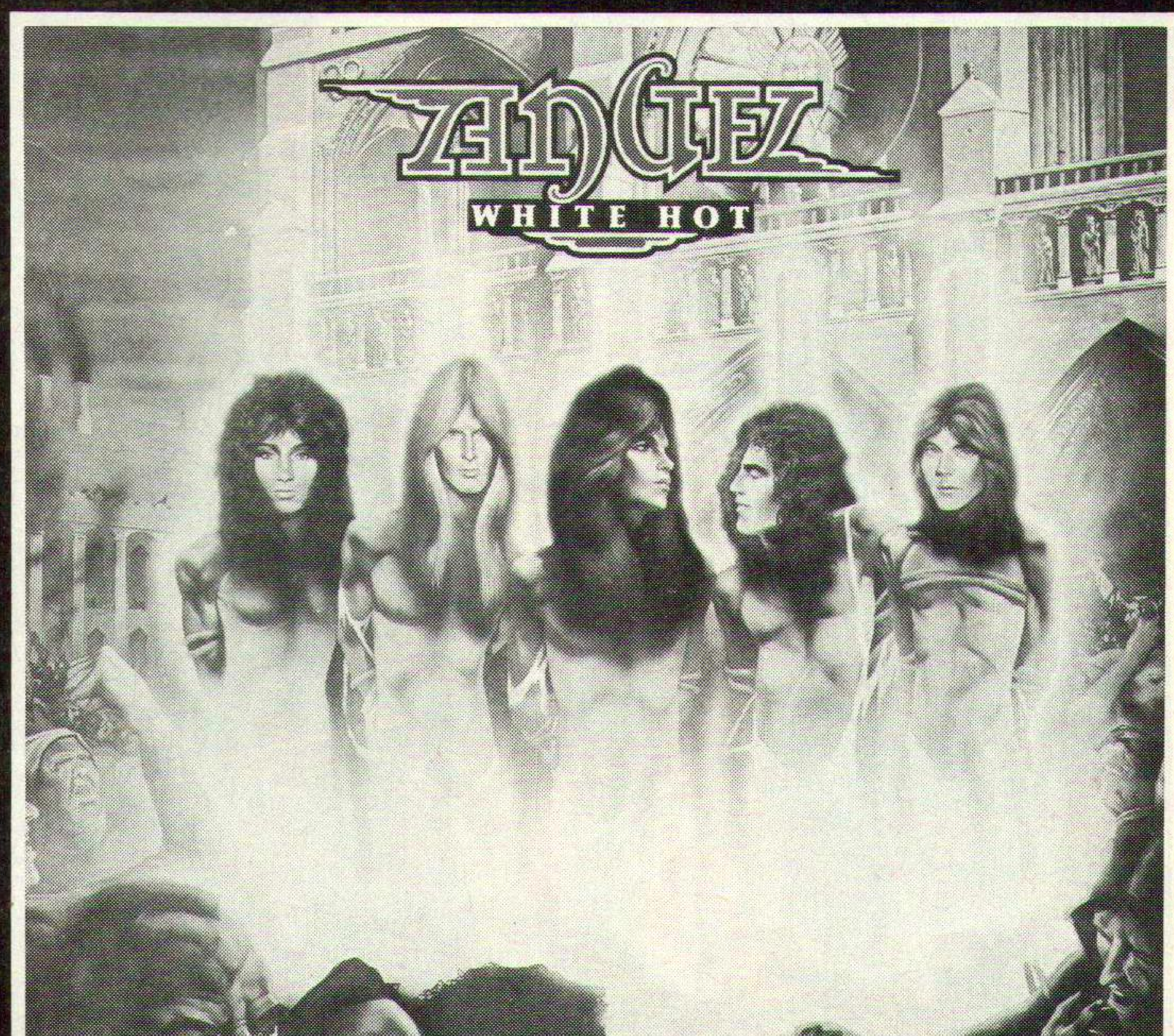
By the end of their '70s tour they had started to include a healthy proportion of new material in the set such as 'LA Lady', 'Bad Time' and 'Wild And Hot'. All three of these songs would turn up in studio form on the next album. Songs like 'The Fortune' and 'Mirrors' had long been dropped from the group's live repetoire. Asked why at the time, Meadows replied somewhat abruptly: "Because I'm sick of castles and stairways to heaven!"

ANGEL HAD begun to get increasingly sick of their image too. the original title of the band's fifth album was 'Bad Publicity' and, so far as the packaging was concerned, the LP sleeve depicted the five band members in 'regular' rock 'n' roller attire being busted by a policeman during a hotel room card game, surrounded by booze and women.

A limited number of albums went out as promos to radio stations prior to the official release date, until Casablanca suddenly freaked out and had them recalled fearing that 'Bad Publicity' was DEFINITELY bad for Angel. Instead, the album was hastily repackaged, retitled 'Sinful', and released in the spring of 1979.

"The decision to change the title and cover was Neil Bogart's," recalls Giuffria. "He felt that we shouldn't in any way be shown in a negative 'bad boy' way. We were always locked into that pretty boy look by the label. However, I think, and I hope you don't think I'm being really pretentious by saying this, but I felt that Angel was about five years ahead of its time."

The original album cover can be a real bugger to find, but copies do exist, they weren't all destroyed, but don't expect to find one for a couple of quid, I paid £50 for mine!



'WHITE HOT': Angel's fourth album was considered to be more pop-oriented than its predecessors

The ads for 'Sinful' claimed that the band were habit forming. Sadly, yet again, all too few record buyers became addicted.

Casablanca didn't really help much by releasing the album at the same time they put out 'Dynasty' from Kiss and 'Bad Girls' from Donna Summer. Both enjoyed massive hype and promotion, resulting in platinum sales and beyond.

'Sinful' is, however, highly praised by critics, many regarding it as the band's definitive work, a consummate album of delicious Pop Metal that opened the doors for a whole host of Glam imitators.

Frank Dimino is in superb form throughout – just listen to his pained performance on 'Don't Take Your Love', the incredible 'Bad Time' or the frantic 'Wild And Hot'. And do I even need to mention the likes of 'Waited A Long Time' too? Why 'Sinful' failed to sell is really one of life's many mysteries.

IN THE earlier months of 1980, Neil Bogart sold Casablanca to Polygram. Angel owed the label one more album to honour their contract. Rather than unleash yet another studio affair, especially now that the label was in new hands that neither knew or cared about them, the quintet polished off a bunch of '78 live recordings and released a pleasing double live package for the few fans who still believed in them.

Titled 'Live Without A Net', the record coupled two shows recorded in Los Angeles and Long Beach. Musically the LP is very impressive, there's plenty of the guitar and keyboard dog fighting patented by Meadows and Giuffria, but the album suffers from being far too overdubbed and edited. Live tapes of similar performances recorded the same year display the Angel live performance in full, glorious form. And 'Live Without A Net' doesn't benefit from not having the clever, biblical-style introduction used to open the show either. (This can be found on a Casablanca radio promo compilation LP, misleadingly titled 'Radio Concert', however.)

The end was near, though. Without the support, both in a financial and loyal sense, from Casablanca, Angel just faded into obscurity. The band's last vinyl offerings were to be found on the soundtrack album to the movie 'Foxes'. The title track and a Punky Meadows-penned tune named

'Virginia' can be located amongst all manner of disco dross, Angel's contributions actually being the best bloody songs on the entire record. '20th Century Foxes' is also performed live by the band in the movie (a tacky teen flick starring Jodie Foster, Scott Baio and ex-Runaway Cherie Curie), the filming of which took place at the end of 1978. The live version of the song can be found on 'Live Without A Net'. Kiss fans may like to note that the disco style of the song actually pre-dates 'I Was Made For Loving You' by about six months – so who ripped off who?

Following 'Live Without A Net's release, Angel finally split with David Joseph, claiming that the manager was severely holding the band back.

Hooking up with Leber/Krebs, the quintet decided the first thing they needed to do was to throw all the white satin and spandex into the dustbin and start looking like men for a change. With this done they hooked up on a tour that combined Angel with Frank Marino and Mahogany Rush, Humble Pie, Russia and Mothers Finest. Billed as 'The 1980 Rock Marathon', it toured the States and each band was supposed to headline at alternate shows. Unfortunately it didn't quite work that way. Frank Marino topped the bill most of the time, whilst Angel headlined only once, in Cleveland, The only city that ever greeted the band with open arms.

Tapes from this tour immediately gave cause for concern. The band sounded jaded. Dimino sounded pissed off, delivering exactly the same raps as he had given in 1976! But the newer songs, such as 'You're So Cold', sounded interesting, so there was a glimmer of hope.

Sadly, it was not to be. The band started to row, frustrated that a new deal was not forthcoming. Felix Robinson was the first to leave, quickly followed by Frank, who had decided to join Paul Paymond on a solo project that the pair had been working on before 'Kipper' had joined MSG.

Ex-Trillion vocalist Dennis Frederiksen was drafted in whilst Rudy Sarzo and then ex-Babys man Riky Phillips filled in on bass. A result of the Phillips/Frederiksen/Angel liaison can be heard on the first, Giuffria-produced White Sister album (released in 1984) in the form of 'Whips' (obviously inspired by the song Frank Zappa once wrote in honour of Punky – 'Punky's Whips') which White Sister recorded.

IN SPIRIT THOUGH the magic had gone and Angel

'LIVE WITHOUT A NET': Angel's vinyl epitaph

split altogether. Punky and Gregg stayed together for a while, but soon decided to part, despite interest from CBS. The dream had died, but the legend lives on.

In 1984 Gregg Giuffria decided to put a new outfit together. He briefly toyed with the idea of calling the band Angel but quickly changed it to Giuffria. He recorded two albums for MCA/Camel, with vocalist David Glenn Eisley and drummer Alan Krigger being the only stable members. The 'Giuffria' debut album (with Craig Goldie on guitar) was a platinum smash and gave birth to two US hit singles. However its follow up, 'Silk And Steel', was a massive flop.

Last year Giuffria gave way to House Of Lords, Gregg's new rockier band, built upon a Whitesnake-style musical approach. The first signing to Gene Simmons' own record lable, HOL are steadily building into quite a force and are currently out on tour with Cheap Trick in America. The self-titled debut LP, released finally in the UK by RCA this month, had been a massive success on import.

So what happened to the others? Felix Robinson briefly joined 707 before linking up with the first incarnation of White Lion. Felix left after recording 'Fight To Survive'. He currently lives in New York working for a hi-fi company after briefly becoming involved in the Angel resurrection that never was (which I'll touch on in a second).

Whilst Dimino recorded a demo with Paul Raymond (as the Ruffians), that project never took off so Frank found himself working with disco man Giorgo Moroder and contributed to the 'Flashdance' soundtrack as vocalist for Cycle V (check out the song 'Seduce Me Tonight').

He then relocated to Portland where he put together a band called Terrif with guitarist Joe Holmes (later to join Lizzy Borden), bassist Emil Lech (now an LA hot shot after being in Sound Barrier for one LP) and Tom Cosmo on drums. Demos were recorded before Dimino, fed up with lack of progress, left for LA once again.

ANGEL WITH the California Boys Choir: their Christmas cash-in number 'The Winter Song' became a minor hit in Japan and Germany

As for Barry Brandt, he did sweet FA other than play drums on LPs by ex-Alice Cooper guitar hero Michael Bruce and David Della Rossa being teaming up with Punky Meadows and Frank Dimino yet again in late '85 in an attempt to get Angel going again.

In the interim period Punky had formed and promptly split a variety of bands, and auditioned for Kiss following Ace Frehley's departure. He had also briefly toyed with the idea of teaming up with Michael Bolton.

At the time fo the so-called 'reformation', Meadows stated that "Angel never really broke up. We were in limbo for a year after Casablanca was sold, waiting to see what would happen. Eventually we got involved with different projects which put Angel on hold a while longer."

Gregg Giuffria, however, didn't want to hook up with this project – after all, he was enjoying too much fame with his own band at the time. So Angel Mark II toyed with the idea of using ex-White Sister keyboardist Garri Brandon for a while before inviting Paul Raymond to join the fray. They also roped in a young bassist from Boston called Marc Normand after Robinson opted out.

As usual, big things were expected but the whole thing blew out. With a succession of managers – ranging from photographer and 'image' expert Barry Levine (an old Angel affiliate) to Andrew Trueman – moving in and out of the picture and a very dissappointing three track demo tape being the sole result of all the big hype surrounding the reformation, is it any wonder the whole thing just disappeared?

CURRENTLY FRANK Dimino is living in Tokyo in a band with Paul Raymond (they sang backing vocals on the Loudness LP too), Punky Meadows is working as a bouncer/doorman in a Virginia club, Barry Brandt is doing nothing in LA and the unknown bassist Normand is 'happening' as a member of ex-Keel guitarist Marc Ferrari's band. Angel is now well and truly back in heaven.

Giuffria is, however, planning to locate the footage filmed at one of the band's shows in Cleveland 1977/'78 with a view to releasing it as a tribute to all those who did believe, and still continue to believe in, possibly the prettiest, most glamorous band that may ever exist . . . on earth or otherwise.

SO WHAT EXACTLY is Glam?!

Well, I know that this is going to cause great chagrin to many of my fellow writers in this here Big *K!* special, not to mention to a sizable proportion of you lot reading this here mag, but Glam '80s style seems to me to consist mainly of average, leaden Heavy Metal bands making a desperate attempt to spice up their marketable appeal with a few cans of Aqua Net hairspray and a bunch of shit raided from their little sister's make-up box.

As far as I'm concerned, the most unappealing aspect of Glam these days is that everybody sounds the bloody same. Like, there's only so many ways to dress up a turd, and it's always gonna be a turd!

Nope, for my shiny gold money, Glam always has been and always will be a '70s phenomenon.

That's the epoch in which it originated, that was the time when bands sporting a Glam look and attitude were consistently up there in the Top 10, and – most importantly of all – that was the time when all the bands who indulged in the trappings of Glam all had something different to say.

Interchangeable? Hardly. Who in their right mind would draw musical comparisons between the Sweet and T Rex? Between Gary Glitter and Mud? Between Wizzard and. . . Slade?

Ah, Slade, four boys from the Midlands whose unique approach to Glam means that, for my money, they'll always stand alongside Marc Bolan as

SLADE CIRCA March 1973, replete with Noddy Holder sporting legendary reflective headgear (far right)

the greatest act ever to find themselves under that particular banner.

After all, who could ever argue with 16 consecutive Top 20 British chart singles? And what better man to discuss those halcyon daze from '71 to '75 than Noddy Holder, Slade's ebullient lead vocalist and guitarist, and arguably *the* face of that pop era?

It wouldn't be too preposterous to claim that it was Slade who invented the genre, but believe it or not Noddy reckons it was something which bassist Jim Lea, guitarist Dave Hill, drummer Don Powell and himself simply fell into.

"THE THING was," explains Noddy in his warm, frank Black Country manner, "that we were actually a skinhead band at the end of the '60s and we were finding that there were a lot of doors being closed to us because of the way we looked.

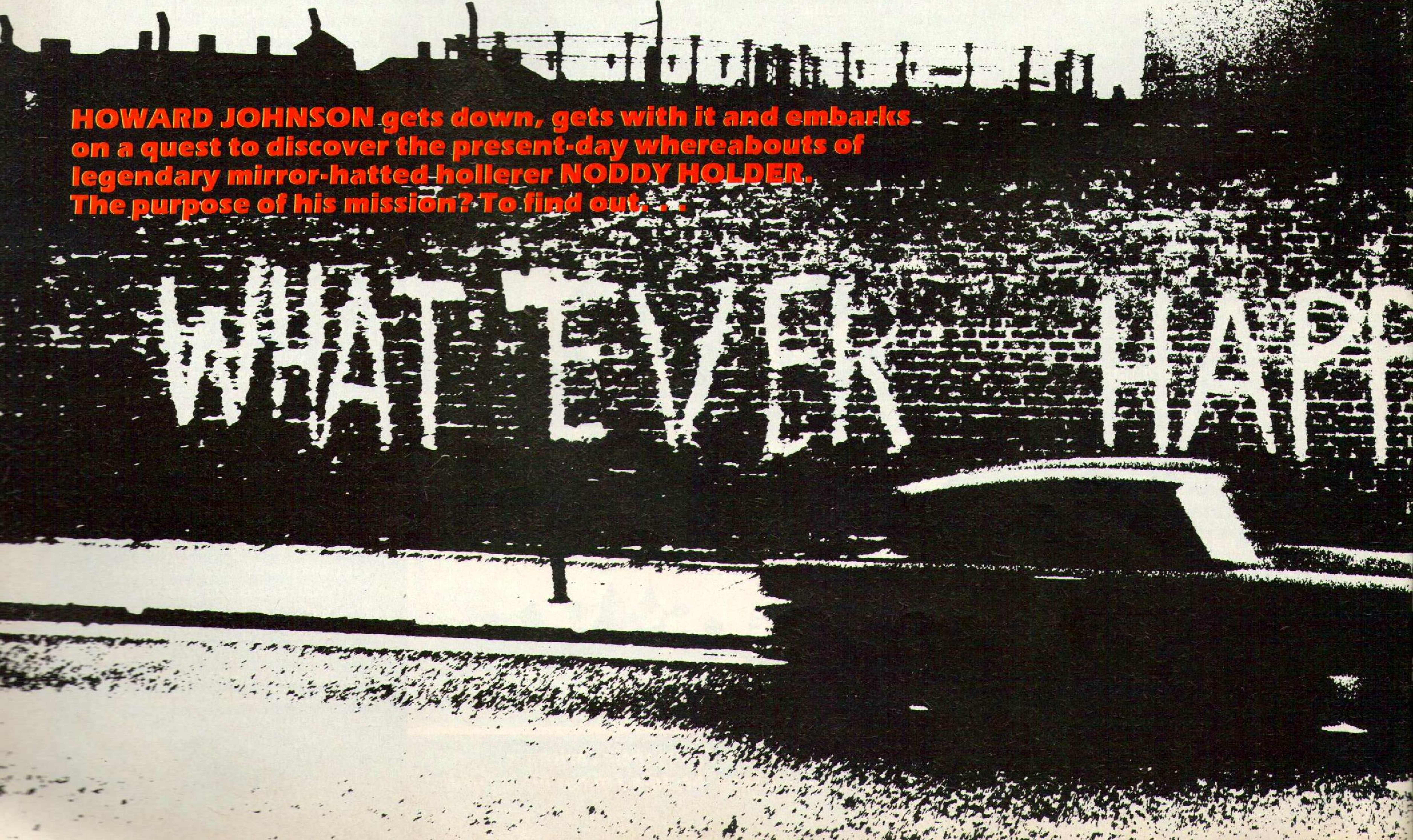
"It wasn't as if the skinheads at the time were tarred with the same reputation that they have today, what with the National Front and all that. It was more concerned with fashion and music, mainly reggae and bluebeat, but there was still something slightly disreputable about it.

"Because we had the big boots, the Ben Sherman shirts and the braces, we did get associated with violence. We couldn't get bookings and we couldn't get on TV shows. So when we got the first sniff of a hit with 'Get Down And Get With It', we realised that if we were to be able to sustain it, then we would have to come up with an image that had a wider appeal.

"All we decided to do was stick with the same roots that we'd always had, but simply make it more colourful. We kept the short trousers and the braces and simply made them more acceptable to the masses.

"It was a conscious decision and, as I remember it, it was us and T Rex who first went for it.

"You have to remember that,



HOWARD JOHNSON gets down, gets with it and embarks on a quest to discover the present-day whereabouts of legendary mirror-hatted hollerer NODDY HOLDER. The purpose of his mission? To find out. . .

up to that point, everybody up on the stage had looked very dowdy. It was jeans and T-shirts and long solos and backs to the audience.

"We'd always been about audience participation and that was the reason why our manager, Chas Chandler (yes, the same guy who discovered and nurtured Jimi Hendrix), signed us in the first place, because we were different, doing something which nobody else was."

So did the change happen all of a sudden?

"Not at all. We just developed it very slowly, certainly not overnight. And the thing was, once we got out of the clubs and into the concert halls, we were able to get more and more outrageous as time went on.

"Each one of us began to work on our own ideas, to develop some kind of image which reflected the individual's personality. I came up with the top hat with the mirrors and the tartan trousers, Dave brought in all the bright, silver stuff and the platform boots and so on and so forth."

BUT DIDN'T the original fans baulk at this new influx of silliness into the band?

"No. I think that we'd been through so many changes anyway that the old fans didn't care one way or the other, because they were simply into the music. And I think that in some ways we always had a somewhat comic image, from the first day we formed in '66.

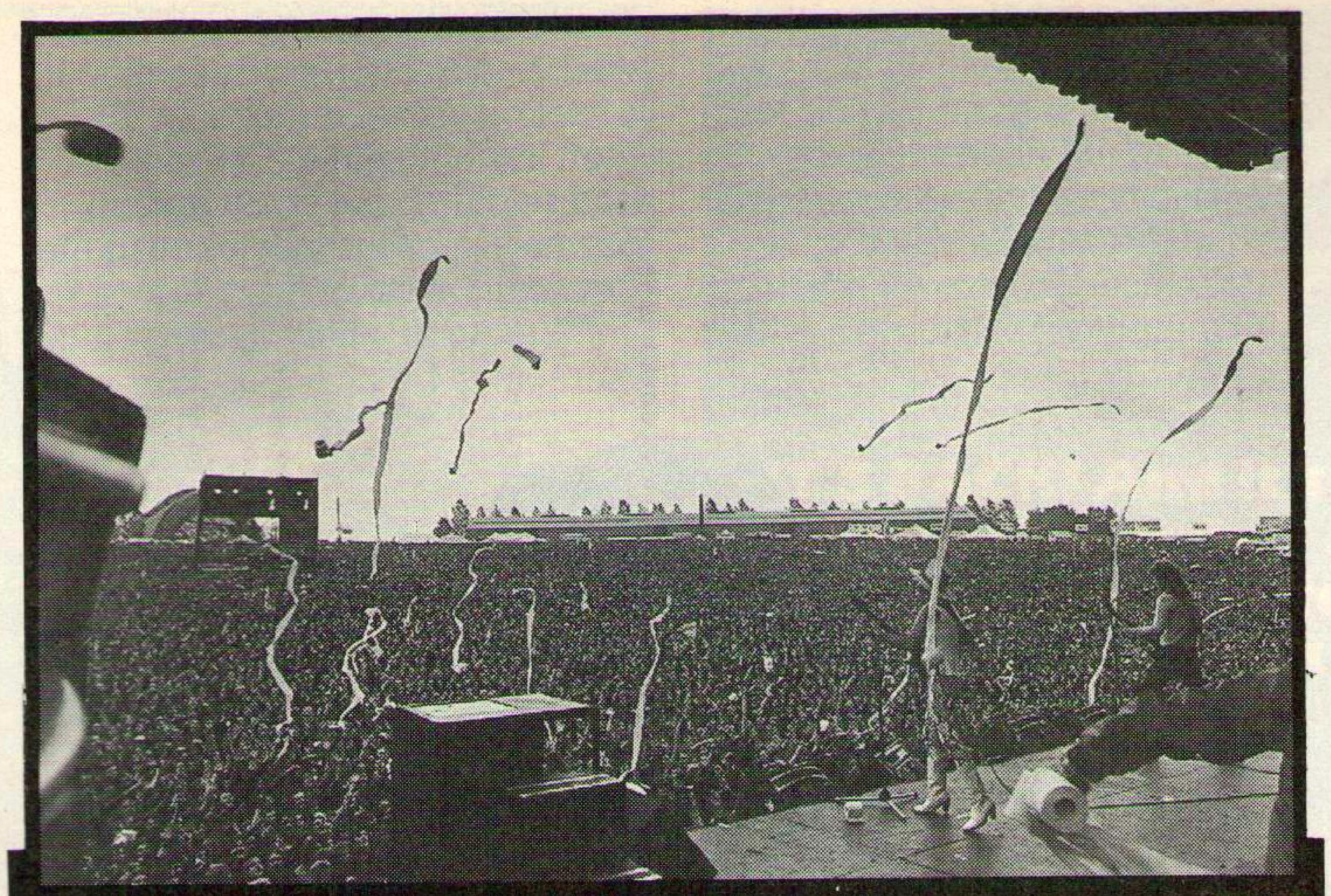
"We always liked to have a laugh with the audience, and if they laughed at the way we looked then we used to like it. We always had the attitude that if we walked on the stage and they already had a smile on their faces then we were already halfway home.

"Then the other half came with the fact that we made some great music. The dressing up bit was only a part of what Slade was about. It wasn't Glam Rock to us, that's what the media called it. It was just colourful clothing to us. I think people in the press saw us, and they saw Bolan doing something similar, and decided to find a category for it."

But at the time did it seem to you that you were actually part of a major happening, of a movement?

"Not at all. To be honest, we didn't really know any of the other bands in the Glam scene. We had no contact with them because we were still based in Birmingham.

"We knew Andy Scott from the Sweet because he'd been playing in a club band in the Bahamas at the same time as we'd been working there, but we really didn't start to see any of the other people until we started to meet at 'Top Of The Pops'.



BOG ROLL 'n' rock: Slade hit the comeback trail for the umpteenth time. Here we see 'em onstage at Castle Donington, August 22, 1981

"We used to know Status Quo really well from playing the same circuit as them all the time and bands like Free, but I don't recall the Glam acts being out and working when we were. I think that there were a lot of acts who jumped on the bandwagon once the likes of Bolan and ourselves started having hits.

"And as far as mass acceptance for that kind of outragousness goes, I think David Bowie was the biggest influence on the greatest amount of people."

And, indeed, Bowie was one of the few artists who could match Slade when it came to a live draw. Memories are short in rock and roll, but Slade were huge in a way which today's top rock acts can only dream of. Number One singles, platinum albums, 18,000 attending sold out shows at Earls Court. . .

"YEAH, I think we were the second band ever to play there, after Bowie, and that was a tremendous thrill, 18,000 people wearing top hats with mirrors all over them is an amazing sight!

"We've got some film somewhere of all these people travelling to the show on the tube wearing these hats. It was like, 'Watch out, the Martians have landed!'. It was a great event and our gigs were always fun because people came dressed up in the gear!"

KONTINUEZ OVER

SLADE

FROM PREVIOUZ PAGE

And that kind of achievement was all the more satisfying and laudable because Slade did it on their own merits all the way. Not for them the employment of the writing talents of Nicky Chinn and Mike Chapman (the Stock, Aitken and Waterman of the day), as was the option followed by many, many bands at the time:

"No, we never got involved with them. We knew them, obviously, but like I said before, ours was a very insular organisation. Everything, including the songs, was controlled by us, and we didn't want to lose that.

"And anyway, there really didn't seem to be any need to use them because our own songs seemed to be doing very nicely, thank you."

And kidding he ain't, not when 1973 alone yielded the band three Number Ones and two Number Twos at home in the UK. Was it busy enough, Noddy?

"Not 'arf! We were always on the road or in the studio – and I mean *all* the time! In those days we had to release an album and four singles every year, without fail. We would come back from some very serious bouts of touring and we'd be straight back in the studio to start on the next batch of stuff.

"Despite our success, the record company was always on our back for the next single and we'd be permanently knackered! I think we probably toured more than any other band.

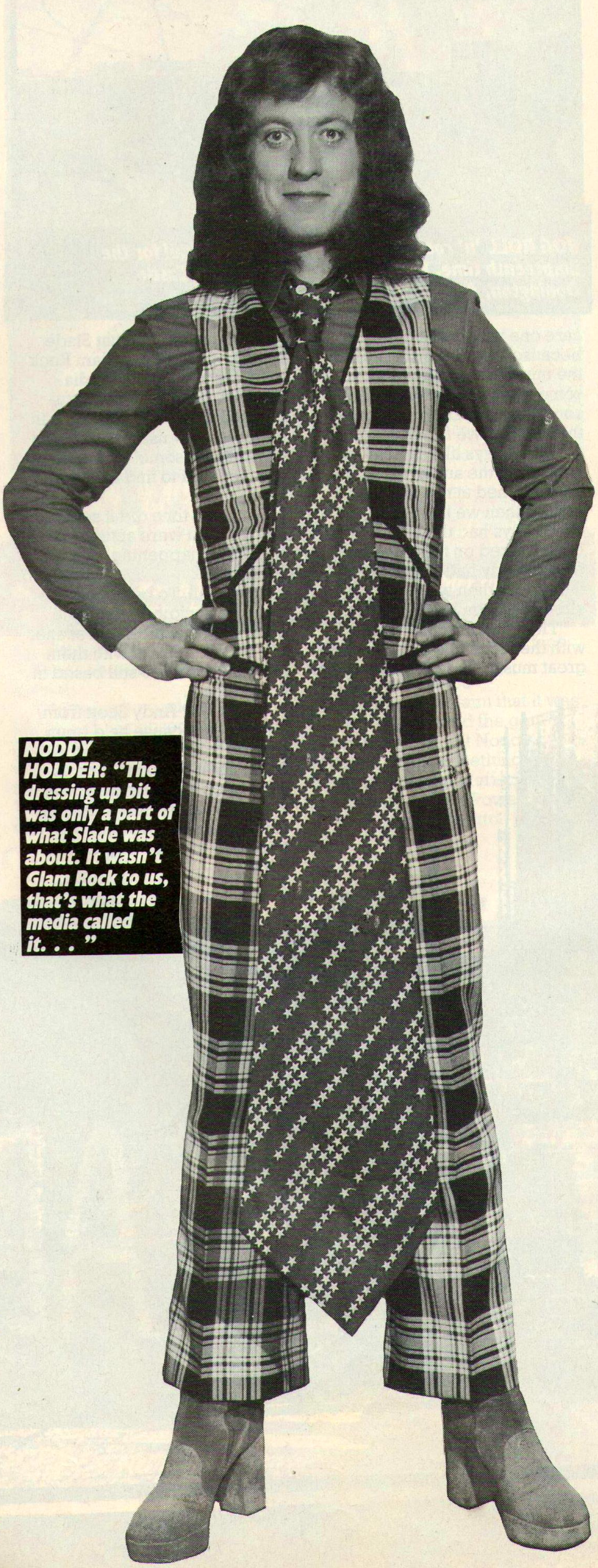
"We did two UK tours a year, every year, and that took some doing! We had no private life at all, we couldn't go to the supermarket or the cinema or anything like that. I don't think we saw anything of reality for four or five years, and it was a drag, but we had to work to that pitch."

AND THE REASON why Slade had to build up to such a fever pitch was mainly as a result of their own staggering success. The band were Number One material in just about every territory in the world. Demand for the band was insatiable in the UK, Europe Japan and Australia. Noddy puts this worldwide appeal down as the major factor behind Slade's failure to really crack it wide open in the States.

"The thing was, at the time there was no medium such as MTV which could let the public actually see the band without them having to tour. The only way to break in the States was to get out there – and stay out there. That's what a lot of bands did, simply packed up and left, but we could never afford to do that because we had so many commitments elsewhere.

"We used to go over there for six or eight weeks a year, which wasn't nearly enough, and when we actually did decide to give it a serious go over there, in '75, then it was too late! FM radio had become dominant and so our music was totally alien to the general format of things.

"We didn't really sit very comfortably beside the Eagles and Steely Dan. It was weird, because we were doing OK in the live arena there, that's what we were known for. We even had Steely Dan opening for us once, and Santana as well! People thought we were an albums act there, whereas we were considered a singles band everywhere else!"



NODDY HOLDER: "The dressing up bit was only a part of what Slade was about. It wasn't Glam Rock to us, that's what the media called it. . ."

But, music aside, it seems to me as if the massive scene revolving around Glam in Britain never really took off in the States to the same extent.

"Oh, you're absolutely right. I think that it never took off over there because the Yanks really hate to have to latch onto something new that's started somewhere else, they like to think they've started everything! We certainly got a kind of cult thing started over there, especially in LA, but when Kiss finally made the kind of stuff that we were doing popular it was years after Glam had happened in the UK.

"Kiss used to come and watch us play in New York at the Academy Of Music, and they'll admit that to you. They just got ideas from us and took it to the furthest extreme, which the Yanks love!"

But did you begrudge Kiss the success that you never won in the States?

"Not once. I thought Kiss were a great band, and I just thought good luck to 'em. If you can't accept ups and downs in this business then you have no right to be in it, it's part of the game."

IT SEEMS TO me that, despite any ups and downs at the time, the Glam era must have been a highly enjoyable period to have been involved in.

"Oh, it was great fun, and because we were so busy we didn't have time to think about its negative side. We never thought about money or anything, we just did it.

"And besides, when things took off for us it was the culmination of five years of tremendously hard work. If I kicked the bucket tomorrow at least I've had all these great memories to content me!"

I always thought that that sense of fun came across in the grooves with all the Glam acts.

"I'm sure it did, and the reason is because nobody was forcing a style on anybody. Chas Chandler also produced as well as managed us, and he just developed what was already there. The records were exciting because they were always put down with a live feel.

"I'm sure that most of the records produced these days are technically better than ours were, but I think that you lose a lot of the buzz.

"Reg Presley from the Troggs always called it 'that little bit of fairy dust' – and I think that's what lacks these days. Who

SLADE BACK in Bushell-approved 'Oi Oi Crackaway' skinhead days

knows where it comes from?"

Not from attention to the most minor technical detail, that's for sure!

"Definitely not, it's all down to feel, I guess. We'd always have three or four takes of a song and if it wasn't happening on that particular day then we'd just move on to the next one.

"Our first really successful album, 'Slade Alive', took three nights to record in front of a studio audience. We used most of the stuff from the second night and mixed it in a few hours. The whole thing cost about £400 to record and it stayed in the British charts for about 16 months. A lot of people say it's our best record, when these days you wouldn't get much change from £100,000 for a decent record!"

AND ONE OF the most amazing puzzlers of all was that with all the work Slade got through during those halcyon days, how did Noddy's voice stand up to it?

After all, his has to be one of the most powerful larynxes ever to have fronted a rock 'n' roll band. 'Squeeze Me Pleeze Me', 'Mama Weer All Crazee Now', 'Get Down And Get With It' – that's some serious vocal performance!

"I don't know how I did it myself," the man grins. "I never used to look after my voice, drinking and smoking and all the rest of it. I only once had any problem. I'd done six weeks in England, eight weeks in Europe and then we had 18 dates in the States. I'd just worked it too much and it went, it was just knackered.

"So I flew to New York and went to see this specialist, a real old professor type. He was used to treating Broadway stars, so he was a bit surprised to see me.

"Anyway, he asked me to sing something, so I did the opening bit of 'Get Down And Get With It', which is pretty raucous. He looked at me and asked how long I'd been singing like that. I replied that I'd been doing it for about 14 years. He just opened the door for me and said, 'If you've been abusing your voice like that for 14 years, I'm sorry, but there's nothing I can do for you'. And that was that!"

And another 14 or so years on, that voice still has the magic, that little bit of fairy dust, that made Slade Glam titans *par excellence*.

Or was that Glitter dust?!

KERRANG! KONTAKTZ

IT'S BACK! And it's coming your way at the end of March. . . *Kerrang! Kontaktz*, the magazine written BY rock fans, FOR rock fans!

KERRANG! KONTAKTZ

METALLICA – have they sold-out their Thrash roots? Or will they rule the Metal world as the new Iron Maiden?

TOO OLD TO ROCK 'N' ROLL – are rock's senior citizens like Lemmy, Ian Gillan, Robert Plant, David Coverdale *et al* past it?

WIMPS OUT! – do softie rockers and AOR types really deserve to be included in the hellishly heavy pages of the mighty *Kerrang!*?

RONNIE JAMES DIO – has the big-voiced but diminutive frontman overstepped his own image and become a self-parody?

MARILLION – can the band survive without Fish? Can Fish make it as a solo star? Or should they both call it a day?

OUT OF CONTROL – HM fans and crowds are traditionally the best-behaved and friendliest of sorts, but are they turning nasty? Has stage-diving got out of control?

KERRANG! KONTAKTZ

THESE ARE THE questions – and we want YOU to answer them! Send us your opinions on these sensitive subjects and we'll print 'em in the third edition of *Kerrang!* Kontaktz – the magazine YOU get to write! Address your neatly written letters (or type 'em out, if you can!) to: *Kerrang!* Kontaktz, Spotlight Publications, Greater London House, Hampstead Road, London NW1 7QZ.

KERRANG! KONTAKTZ

ON THE PROWL

It's been a while since Californian sleazoids FASTER PUSSYCAT strutted their stuff supporting Guns N' Roses on their UK tour, but don't worry 'Cat-fans . . . cos there's a new LP being made even as you read this. ALISON JOY opens a tin of Whiskas for vocalist TAIME DOWNE

YOU WANNA talk low profile? As in *looooow* profile? Lower than your average earthworm's pointy-toed booties? Lower, even, than Krusher Joule's IQ? Then you'll be wantin' a little chat about Faster Pussycat.

Yeah, you remember, those skinny, bad-ass kitties you wouldn't take home to mother who put out a gobsmackingly well in order eponymous debut LP waaay back in the mists of '87, then promptly hopped aboard the Guns N' Roses crazy train to open for them over here in fine fashion at the tail end of the same year.

But since that hairspray haven at Hammersmith all those beers ago . . . like, zilch. Time, then, for those ever-rockin' transatlantic phone lines to be put into hasty action with a *K!* kall direct to vocalist Taime Downe's Los Angeles dog 'n' bone.

FASTER PUSSYCAT: "We wanna be different on the next LP . . . on the first one all the balls were lost in the production"

IT'S EARLY IN California, far too early for any self-respectin' sleazeball to be even contemplatin' answerin' the phone, but our hero struggles valiantly awake:

"Ah . . . ooh . . . cough . . . er . . . helloooo?"

He sounds well tired, so we slap a bit of lightweight Christmas banter around while his bod an' brain gear up, then we're off.

So exactly what *have* you boyz been up to?

"We've been constantly touring the USA, really," he drawls. "We did some dates with David Lee Roth . . . oh, and we played in Alaska with Alice Cooper! We finally got off the road in the Summer of last year, and since then we've been getting songs together for the new album."

The second Faster Pussycat album – entitled 'Wake Me When It's Over' – is due in Spring of this year, and if things are on schedule, recording of said opus should be taking place right about now in LA. The debut had its bits twiddled by Ric Browde (Poison, Smashed Gladys); at the time of our conversation a producer for LP Number Two had yet to be firmed up.

"We're deciding between two people at the moment," states Taime.

"We liked the last LP, but there were a few things on the production side I'd like to change. We wanna be different on the next LP, we're not gonna sound the same – the new stuff's so strong we just can't wait to play it. The material on the first LP was really a lot heavier than how it came out – all the balls were lost in the production. But you've seen us live, so you'll know that!"

Indeed, as will anyone who saw the Pussies struttin' their definitely live an' dangerous set around Britain's creaky stage boards. Fired up an' wired up, the Faster Pussycats have far more bite than any White Lions. Songs like 'Cathouse', 'Babylon', 'Bathroom Wall' and 'Don't Change That Song' provided plenty to get your claws into, jacked into life by our five-man funhouse: Taime, guitarists Greg Steele and Brent Muscat, bassist Eric Stacy and drummer Mark Michals.

But what about the new stuff? Gimme titles, Taime!

"They're all great! There's the title track called 'Wake Me When It's Over' . . ."

Oh yeah? Is that one in any way, er, personal?!

"Yeah, a little bit," he giggles. "It could be about anything – a bad dream! There's also gonna be songs called 'Love Dove' (a bit funky), 'Slip Of The Tongue', 'Poison Ivy' (Taime's fave), 'Where There's A Whip There's A Way' and 'Tattooed'."

Can I spot some well dodgy lyrics comin' up?

"Yeah, we wrote them on the road – about all the terrible things we wanna inflict on people!" he laughs. "Nah, I'm only kidding . . . agh . . . cough . . . splutter." He degenerates into explosive grunts.

Are you okay?

"Uh, yeah. My throat's real dry. Greg (Steele) and Mark (Michals) came over yesterday and we spent all day watching football and drinking beer. And I slaved over a hot stove! Aaaahh!"

I KNEW my kitchen was lackin' one vital cosmetic accessory . . . Anyway, backtrackin' a bit, I ask Taime if he knows how many the first LP sold.

"I'm not sure," he says indifferently. "Around 300,000, I guess. I don't give a shit, I'm tired of worrying. So long as it's selling at all it's fine by me."

What, no lust for an immense Swiss bank account and 13 Lamborghinis in the mansion drive?

"Nah! I've got a jeep, a nice apartment and a nice girlfriend, so . . . I'd like some money for food and toilet paper though! Seriously, I guess I'll buy a house one day.

"At the moment I just want the next LP to be cool. No-one in Europe knows who we are any more, but sometimes it's cool to have a low profile. You know what I mean, not many people know about the band, but those who do really like us. And then I wanna tour – get the hell on the road. We've been home since April last year and we're bored, f**ked out of our minds. Shit! We gotta get the record done an' get out there!"

The enthusiasm flows down the phone line an' gushes out all over the floor, leaving a nasty stain under my office desk, next to the latest pile of Greek Hardore albums waiting to be handed out to 'lucky' reviewers. Frantically mopping up the mess with one of Dave Reynolds' spare Syrups, I ask the Faster Feline how he enjoyed his stint over here with Guns N' Roses.

"That was so much fun!" he exclaims. "We didn't like the breakfasts, but the people were really cool and treated us very well. In the States you still get places where they throw shit at you – but they'll be buyin' our f**kin' record this year! Hahaha!"

BESIDES BEIN' a budding megastar, our Taime is, of course, well known for his associations with the LA club he jointly founded, the Cathouse. Still going strong today, I ask if his involvement with the venture has continued.

"Nah, I got bored," he replies. "Two years of going to that club is like going to the same restaurant all the time. F**k! I want to eat something different – I don't want a hamburger, I want a chickenburger! I've started a new club called Camp – a barbecue video bar! That's just a hobby though."

And that should be just about all he's got time for over the next coupla months, the amount of time the band are planning to spend in the studio on the recording of the so-far untitled album.

As Taime says, "We're not gonna use a f**kin' choir or anything . . ."

Right. No choir. How d'ya feel about bein' in the studio?

"It's great so long as the right person (producer) is in there with you.

"This time it hopefully won't be so rushed. On the last LP the vocals were all over the place and I wasn't given any time to make them better. The thing is, I've learned a lot on the road; I was new to it then."

Indeed, this second LP should prove an interestin' acid test: were Faster Pussycat just a fad of the year, or are they a true force to be reckoned with?

I'm puttin' my overdraft on the latter; I reckon this band have the songs and the purrin' personalities to etch themselves out a spot of longevity.

Pic Karen Mason

THE BRAT PACK

RAY ZELL pays heavily made-up homage to obscure mid-'70s Trash act the HOLLYWOOD BRATS, a band once described by someone or other as 'a sort of British New York Dolls'

WHEN IS a legend not a legend? When it's the Hollywood Brats: Andrew Matheson – vocals, Casino Steel – keyboards, Brady – guitar, Wayne Manor – bass and Louis Sparks – drums.

The Zell 'discovered' the marvellous, astoundin', amazin', astonishin', fabulous and incredible (have I made my point here?) Hollywood Brats back (I mean 'baaaaaaack'!) in '78 when New Wave (gob! spit! Anarchy!) mag *ZigZag* reviewed their recorded-in-'74, impossible-to-get-hold-of 'Grown Up Wrong' album as a blackmail corner/curiosity piece, describin' 'em *'a sort of British New York Dolls'*.

I tell ya, the Zell's appetite wasn't whetted – it was saturated! I desperately wanted this album the same way I wanted Joan Jett completely and utterly at my mercy!

Anyways, it wasn't 'til 1980 that I got to assault my senses with the elpee, when Cherry Red records (bless 'em!) released it as simply 'The Hollywood Brats'.

Dressed in a black 'n' purple striped sleeve (not the original), it gave not a hint of the glam-rock 'n' roll-monster it contained.

But there . . . there on the record's label was the pic that should have been blown up and splashed proudly on the cover – the Hollywood Brats: lipsticked, powdered 'n' poutin'!

The vinyl, to coin a tried 'n' tested hyperbole, is way, way, waaay ahead of its time. 'Too much too soon' even!

An energised Rolling Stones with the untamed my-fist-your-face guitar of Brady, and the somewhat effeminate vocals of Andrew Matheson spittin' out such fine self-penned lyrics as: *'Wake up little Suzy, stop pickin' your nose'* ('Tumble With Me') and *'I'm gonna be sick on you, on your head, your face, your dress, your legs and your shoes'* ('Sick On You').

In fact, *Record Mirror*'s review of it claimed: *'If Aerosmith heard this album back in '74 – they'd have given up!'*

Which pretty much sums up the Hollywood Brats' initial vinyl impact. Believe me, the Quire Boys, Dogs D'Amour and the Dirty Strangers, with all due respect, will never, EVER produce anything to match the Brats!

BEFORE WE indulge in a wee chat (or shootin' of the rap) I had recently with guitarist Brady – an 'in-a-nutshell' biog on certain Brat members since their split in '75: keyboard player Casino Steel went on to join punk outfit the Boys, who actually destroyed two Brats toonz on their debut album. He later teamed up with Gary (Heavy Metal Kids/'Auf Wiedersehen Pet') Holton and released a couple of country 'n' western albums that were, incidentally, much loved by Hanoi Rocks.

Vocalist Andrew Matheson returned to his native Canada where he became a professional footballer, although he did return to Britain around '79 to record a solo album. 'Monterey Shoes'. Hardly Brats style, it was very much a 'songwriter's' elpee, dancin' inoffensively somewhere between Bruce Springsteen and Barry Manilow!

And guitarist Brady's list of exploits include stints with Reckless Eric, the London SS (the band that spawned Generation X and the Clash) and the Mannish Boys.

But what is the Hollywood Brats story? The Zell tracked down Brady The Brat who is now settled in London playin' occasional 'bar-band' stuff. A man who, in another time-stream, probably became as influential a guitarist as Keith Richards, Joe Perry and Johnny Thunders! Yet in this one, he's with yours truly in a Holborn pub more than happy to reminisce with his warm Oirish accent and a 'those were the days' gleam in his eye.

"IT ALL STARTED in early '73 when I saw an ad in *Melody Maker*: *'Queen need guitarist drunk on Keith Richards and Scotch'*! I thought – 'THAT'S ME!'

"I got an audition, and I tell ya, the first time I saw Andrew walk in the room I couldn't believe it! I'd never seen a man in make-up like that before . . . he looked like Alice Cooper or something . . . !"

Yeah, but what's this 'Queen' business?

"Oh, we were called 'Queen'! But we changed our name for obvious reasons. Once we saw a picture of Freddie Mercury – we didn't want anything to do with him!" he laughs.

Had you heard of the New York Dolls at this time?

"Only of their name. Andrew thought it was a great name and decided we should be called something similar. We considered 'Brixton Brats', but as we were based in Paddington it didn't make sense. And Andrew just walked in one day and said, 'I've got it – the Hollywood Brats!'"

Hollywood? But that makes even less sense than Brixton!

"I know," laughs Brady.

So who were the Brats' influences?

"Basically the Stones. I thought we were taking over where the Stones left off. I remember talking to Guy (Mott The Hoople svengali) Stevens and he said, 'The Stones hadn't finished – how can anyone else carry on?' Although lyrically with Andrew it was always Ray Davies . . . no American stuff at all . . . ahh, you should've seen the great man (Andrew), he was up there with Bowie and Jagger, without a doubt!

"We definitely weren't appreciated, we went right over everyone's heads. We were called a bad copy of the Faces. I mean, we were getting into the glam thing, but we didn't want to be like the Rubettes or Mud . . . we wouldn't stoop so low! Ha! We used to go to the Marquee and laugh at other people there! There was no-one else like us . . . except Bowie on another level . . . !"

HOW DID THE recording of the album come about?

"A guy called Ken Mewis, who became our manager, came to see us at the Speakeasy in James Street off Oxford Circus. It was the kind of place where you'd see Keith Emerson at the bar or members of Wings hanging out . . . a rich man's Gossips. Live, people couldn't handle us, the make-up along with our arrogance . . . but Ken thought we were f**kin' great!

"I remember Ken coming into the studio when we were recording some demos and holding up the New York Dolls album saying, 'This is what you're up against!'

"We just went, 'Oh shit!' They looked amazing! Then we put their album on and thought, 'No competition!'

"The actual album was recorded between July and August '74 at Olympic Studios, Barnes, the same studio the Stones' 'Beggars Banquet' was recorded at. Ha! The engineer didn't understand us at all!

"Anyway, our management company. which was the worst management company in the world, didn't like the album. We even did a showcase for some guy from RCA who said, 'Well, they're OK . . . but they should be more like Bachman Turner Overdrive'!

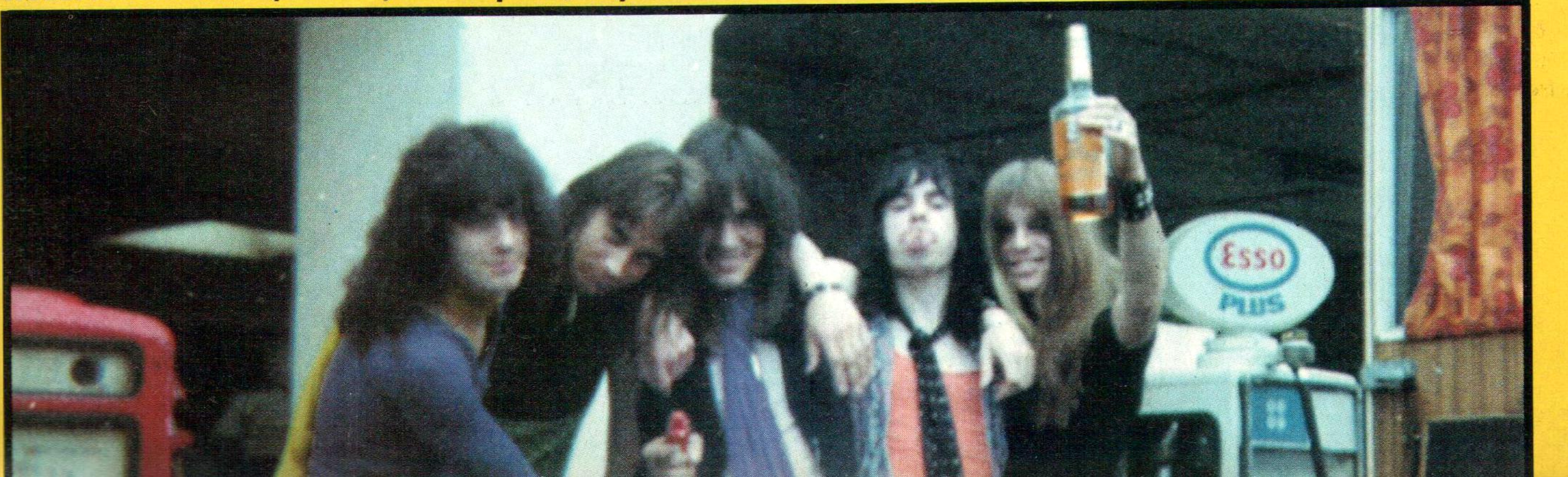
"In April '75 we were dropped by our management company for being a bunch of arseholes who couldn't play. So Andrew and Cas (Casino Steel) went to Canada. They said to get a deal. I thought they were leaving a sinking ship. They didn't get a deal. Casino did get the album released in Scandinavia around '75/'76, which was the only place it was available until Cherry Red released it in 1980."

I'VE HAD A cassette of a 'second' Brats album for a few years now, which is a cross between the first album and Matheson's solo. It was recorded in Norway in '81 with a session bassist as a 'get-together'. And it turns out ol' wheeler-dealer Casino got that bugger released in Scandinavia too a year or so back, under the rather cute handle of 'Whatever Happened To The Hollywood Brats'.

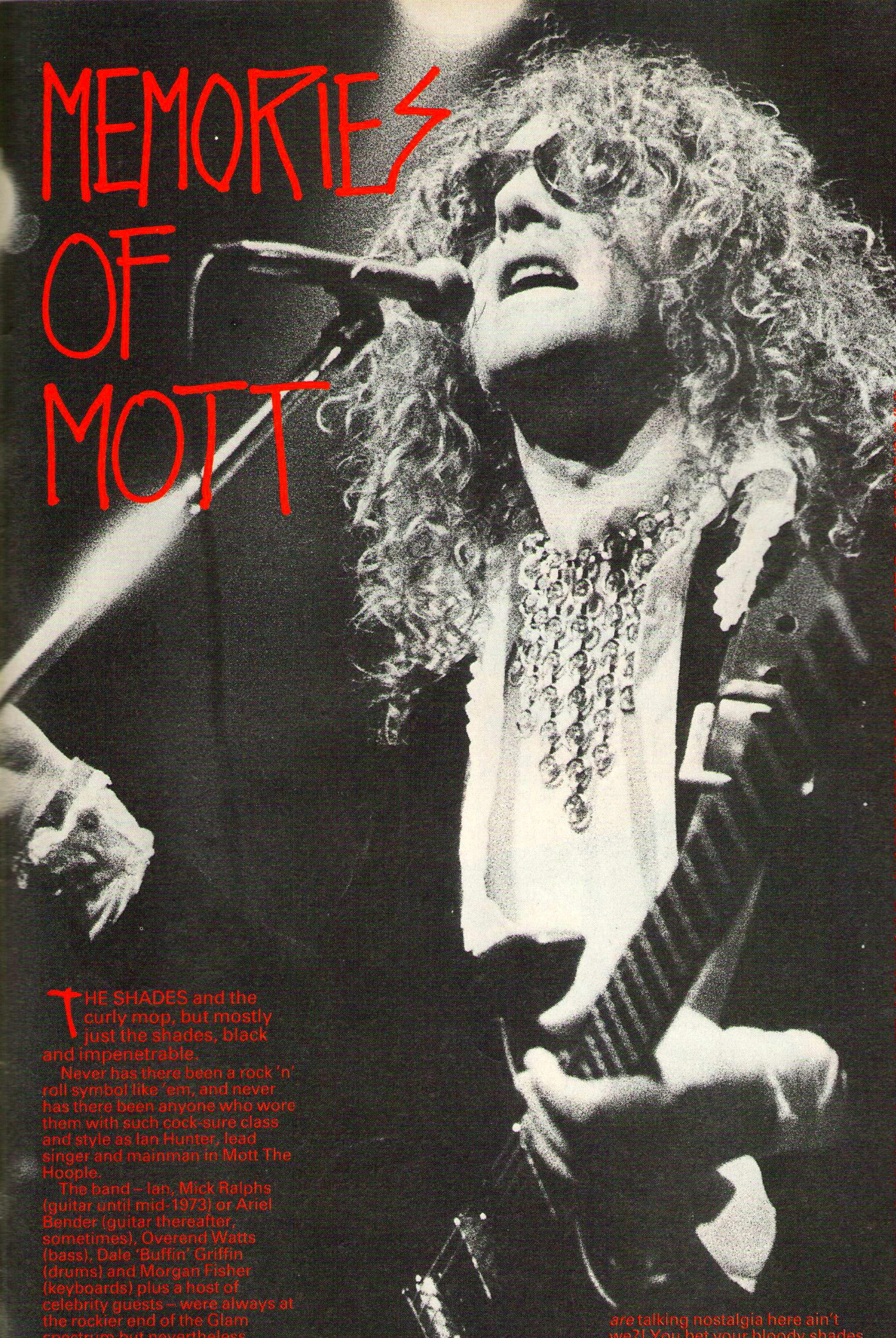
"I asked Casino did it sell," said Brady, as always with a laugh, "and he said, 'What the f**k Brady, of course it didn't!'"

Talk about a band in the wrong place at the wrong time, in the wrong solar system, in the wrong galaxy etc. etc . . . !

HOLLYWOOD BRATS (from left): Louis Sparks, Wayne Manor, Andrew Matheson, Brady, Casino Steel



MEMORIES OF MOTT



THE SHADES and the curly mop, but mostly just the shades, black and impenetrable.

Never has there been a rock 'n' roll symbol like 'em, and never has there been anyone who wore them with such cock-sure class and style as Ian Hunter, lead singer and mainman in Mott The Hoople.

The band – Ian, Mick Ralphs (guitar until mid-1973) or Ariel Bender (guitar thereafter, sometimes), Overend Watts (bass), Dale 'Buffin' Griffin (drums) and Morgan Fisher (keyboards) plus a host of celebrity guests – were always at the rockier end of the Glam spectrum but nevertheless enjoyed five top 20 singles over a hectic 19 month period between August 1972 and March 1974.

The tunes were 'All The Young Dudes' (written for the band by David Bowie when Mott were on the verge of jacking it in), 'Honaloochie Boogie', 'All The Way From Memphis', 'Roll Away The Stone' and 'Golden Age Of Rock 'N' Roll'. Classics every one.

After a couple of lesser hits – 'Foxy Foxy' and 'Saturday Gigs' – the band fell apart at the end of '74, leaving Ian Hunter to go solo.

Seven albums and nine years later I spoke to the man, still resolutely refusing to remove his shades. I can honestly say that I found him to be the most awkward bastard I've ever interviewed. After almost an hour of probing to receive only half-hearted short 'n' snappy answers to what I'd figured were relevant and interesting questions, I finally gave up and asked him, "How do you look back on Mott the Hoople?"

It was a hackneyed cop-out, but I was desperate and I worshipped the guy. Amazingly, he opened up and delivered the following rambling monologue which answered everything. It is now exclusively revealed here for the very first time! Okay, okay, I know it's almost six-years-old, but we *are* talking nostalgia here ain't we?! You bet your bloody shades we are. . .

Over to you, Ian:

"To me it was a real pain in the arse. But now all these people are saying they were influenced by it – I guess we were just lucky.

"The only thing I can tell you about Mott The Hoople was that they were *honest*, a truthful band. That's probably what f**ked them up. . .

"They weren't that good, so the kids thought if *they* can do it, *we* can do it! I always remember David Johansen of the New York Dolls – they *loved* Mott The Hoople and they got together because they could *see* we were not that brilliant.

"Most good rock 'n' roll bands aren't good, they're pretty scruffy. The Stones were never that good, neither were the other great rock bands, it was just this mad craziness – leaping about and all that business! I'm not sure. . . I wouldn't want to take responsibility for all them bands we influenced!

"For *some* of them, yeah, it's real nice. But the strangest people will come up and tell you that Mott influenced them. Then you listen to their music and it's like. . . HOW?

"I can't hear *any* band that sounds like Mott The Hoople. Their sound was a combination of Bill Price – who was an *excellent* engineer. Nobody ever talks about him, but he *should* be talked about. He's responsible for some of the best records ever made. He did 'Live And Let Die', Roy Wood's Move and Wizzard stuff, the Sex Pistols, the Pretenders. . . he helped us a lot. Bowie taught us a bit, but beyond that we were still floundering around. . .

"I'm *sure* Bill used to sneak back in and remix after we'd f**ked the thing up! I remember with 'All The Way From Memphis' – all of a sudden one day it sounded a hell of a lot better! Bill's an unsung hero who's not into producing or people knowing about him but he's solidly been involved in hit after hit for at least 14 years (*and counting!*). . .

"It was a combination of *him* and our inefficiency.

"Roy Thomas Baker once told me that him and Queen sat down for *six weeks* trying to get our sound. I told him, 'No wonder you couldn't get it – those f**kers can play and we couldn't!'

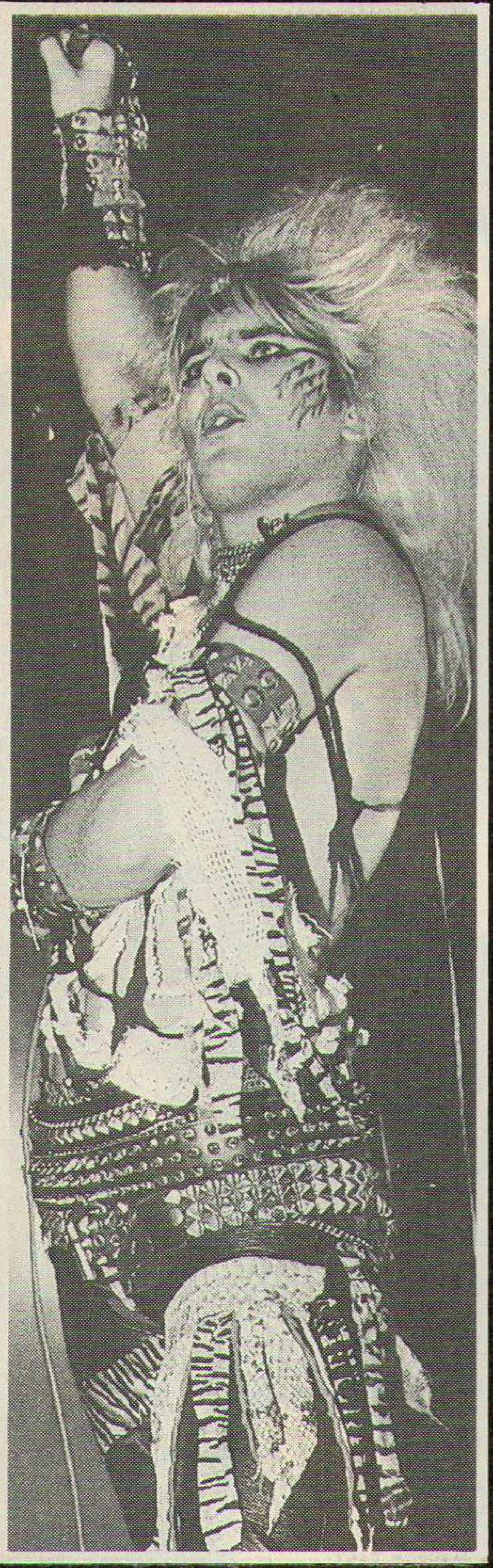
"I'm not trying to put Mott the Hoople down, because it was fantastic – the whole thing was great – but it really was a comedy of errors.

"It seemed that when we 'made it' we didn't make it at all, it seemed that everything else just fell away. . . Then Bowie came along and he was doing better than we were and that pissed us off a lot!"

'Nuff said. **NEIL JEFFRIES**

Pic Joe Giron
D'MOLLS

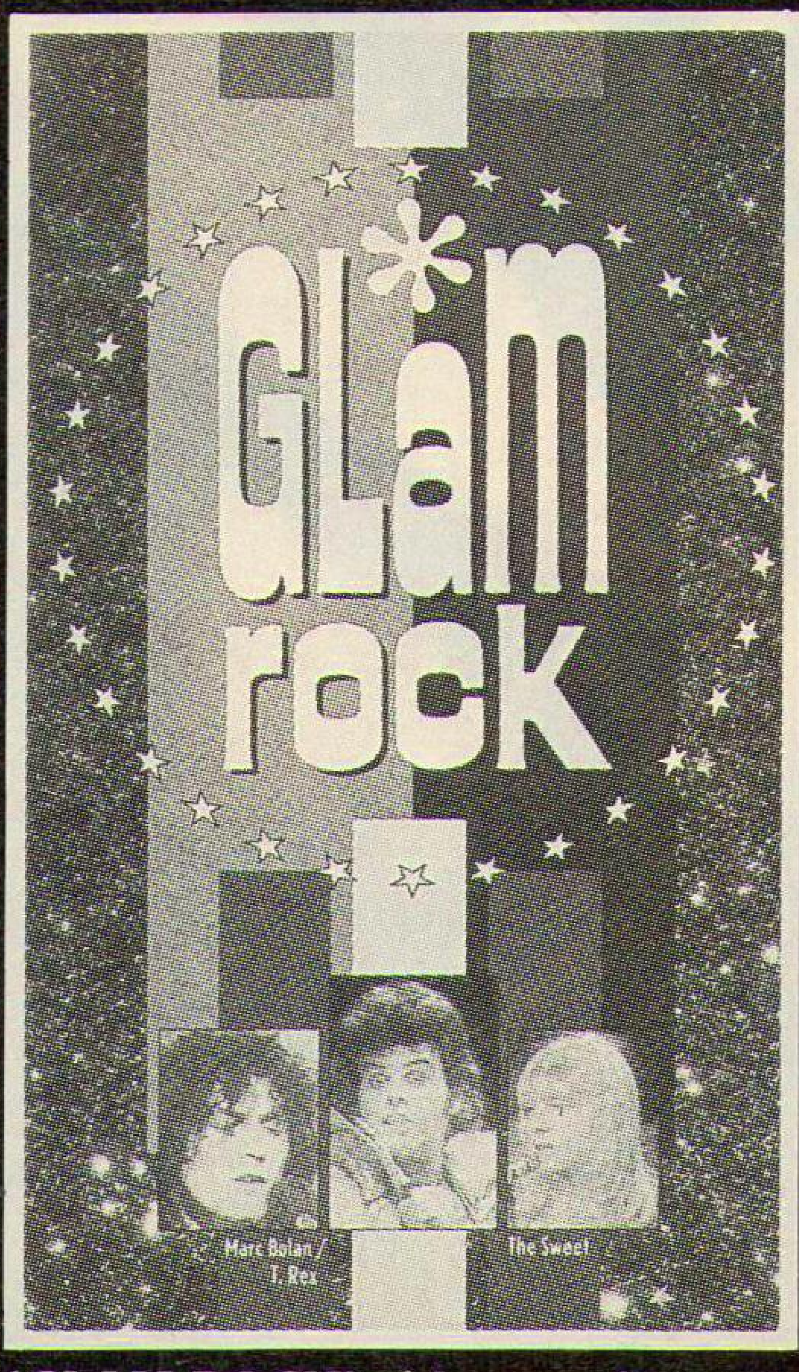
GREAT GLAM KOMPETITION!



ROCKY SHADES of Wrathchild: win his stage outfit!

MICK TUCKER of the Sweet: fancy paradin' around in these striped trousers?

MARC BOLAN: 10 copies of the latest T. Rex vid are up for grabs!



'GLAM ROCK' video: we've got 20 copies to give away!

TO CELEBRATE the first of the new-look editions of *Mega Metal Kerrang!*, here's a captivatin' competition for ya!

In tune with the nancy boy nature of this here issue, each of the poutin', preenin' prizes we have up for grabs has a distinctly Glam-oriented appeal!

Here's the red hot 'n' rouged run-down of the sleazoid stuff we've got to give away . . .

20 COPIES of the fab new 'Glam Rock' video – a 15 track visual epic featuring the likes of Gary Glitter, Slade, T. Rex, Sweet, Wizzard and Alice Cooper!

10 COPIES of the latest Channel 5 video from the elfin electric warrior himself: Marc Bolan of T. Rex! This 'un features a total of 21 trax, includin' 'Ride A White Swan', 'Get It On' and 'Jeepster'!

TWO PAIRS of Glam Rockin' platform boots, as originally worn by no less a man than Andy Scott of the Sweet!

ONE PAIR of supremely stylish flared 'n' striped trousers, kindly donated by the Sweet's Mick Tucker! (The very same strides you can see the man wearing in the pic on this page in fact.)

ONE CUSTOMISED STAGE OUTFIT, as worn by self-proclaimed Glam Titan Rocky Shades, vocalist with Wrathchild!

10 PICTURE DISC VERSIONS of the megalithic new Wrathchild album 'The Biz Suxx'!

Just answer the following three questions correctly, state your preference of prize and send your entry on a postcard to: *Mega Metal Kerrang!* Glam Rock Competition, Spotlight Publications, Greater London House, Hampstead Road, London NW1 7QZ.

1) **Name the four members of Wrathchild.**

2) **Complete the following Sweet songtitles: 'Ballroom . . .', 'Fox On . . .', 'Wigwam . . .' and 'Little . . .'.**

3) **Who once had a hit with a song called 'Children Of The Revolution'?**

A BOY'S FIRST KISS

What was it like to be a young, impressionable 13 year old kid, into rock 'n' roll and living in America at the height of KISS' stackheeled success? Delinquent DON KAYE reveals all . . .

KISS: 'I was dying to see the band live,' recalls Don Kaye. 'I would have sold my sister for the chance . . .'

RECEIVED MY first Kiss when I was but 11 years old.

I went over my friend's house, just to generally shoot the breeze, horse around, maybe listen to a few of his older brother's records.

At the time, I was into Elton John and Sweet, primarily. But some of my elders (the 17-year-olds in the neighbourhood) were slowly turning me on to Led Zeppelin, and I was hearing some pretty cool stuff on the radio too: things like 'Smoke On The Water', 'Easy Livin'', 'Can't Get Enough' and 'Bohemian Rhapsody' were seeping into my consciousness, paving the way for me to set foot upon the sacred path of Heavy Metal.

So there I was at my friend's house, browsing through his brother's considerable collection, when I chanced upon a garish, colourful, outrageous album cover depicting four wild-haired musos dressed in costumes of black leather and silver studs, their faces painted in startling white-and-black make-up.

They were surrounded by lights and smoke, and in the background hung what was obviously their name: KISS.

"What's this?" I asked.

"Oh, that's this new band that's really cool," enthused my friend, Shawn by name. "The bass player breathes fire and spits blood! And they explode bombs onstage! Plus they never go on without their make-up!"

Sounded interesting. . .

F COURSE THE record I had noticed was 'Kiss Alive', to this day still, to my mind at least, the definitive Kiss album. That was the one that broke them in the US after two years and three studio albums of trying.

It was the LP that captured the raw energy and magic of a Kiss concert on vinyl, while leaving at least some impression of the visual aspect of the band's performance.

America responded, and for the next two-to-three years (depending on who you ask), Kiss ruled the United States.

Now while the band also made inroads into the UK and European markets, they never became superstars on that side of the Atlantic until well after they peaked in the States, and their biggest success in England and on the Continent came after they removed the make-up and went through several major personnel changes.

By that time, the magic was gone for myself and a lot of older Kiss fans, who had grown up with Gene, Paul, Ace and Peter – and indeed the operative word here is "magic".

Kiss had something, a chemistry of some sort, coupled with some of the greatest marketing and merchandising in rock 'n' roll history, that truly captured the imaginations of millions of American kids, yours truly very definitely included.

I remember for my birthday getting both 'Kiss Alive' and 'Destroyer' as presents. What gifts! Those were the very first Kiss albums I owned and I played them over and over again until it seemed as if the needle would pop right through the plastic.

But the sounds! 'Rock And Roll All Nite', 'Detroit Rock City', 'Shout It Out Loud'. . . these were tunes that conveyed such a feeling of power, of rebellion, and they complemented the group's larger than life, mysterious image in a unique way.

Kiss were telling everyone that they could do whatever the hell they wanted, and so could everybody else: be yourself!

Well, kids didn't exactly be themselves – they tried to be Kiss. Come Halloween, half the lads out trick-or-treating were done up as their favourite Kiss member (oddly, the most popular ones seemed to be the monstrous Gene Simmons or the super-cool Ace. Paul was probably a bit too fey and Peter the Cat just a little too normal).

Y THE MIDDLE of 1976, Kiss were everywhere; they had even conquered the radio, first with the live 'Rock And Roll All Nite' and then, hugely, with 'Beth'.

The critics, by and large, hated this gigantic living comic book, but who were they? Their grievances against the band, silly as they were, certainly weren't stopping fans from turning the group's five albums into gold and platinum.

And God, the Devil and perhaps even 'Krusher' Joule combined could not stop the raving Kiss legions from filling the arenas to the brink of bursting.

The Kiss live show was a legend in its own time. The magazines were full of photos of Simmons, head thrown back, flames leaping 20 feet into the air from his mouth, or else crouched by the edge of the stage, blood gurgling between his lips and down his jaws. Or Ace, writhing in ecstasy as his guitar incinerated in his hands. Then Peter, rising 30 feet into the air on his hydraulic drum riser while enough flashpots to level Greater London House detonated below. That was entertainment – and these were just the pictures!

Yessiree. . . my fondest dream in late 1976 was to go see Kiss in concert. I couldn't get enough live photos of the band, which were readily available in all the Kiss magazines coming out at the time.

That's right. . . Kiss were too Goddamned big to be cooped in the regular rock magazines with all the other groups. They had entire magazines devoted to them, filled with road stories, trivia, millions of photos, interviews, every little thing you might possibly want to know about the guys. My personal favourite was Ace – I just thought that man with the smokin' guitar was too f**kin' cool. . .

But getting back to the point, I was dying to see Kiss live. I would have sold my sister for the chance. Being 11 years old, though, I didn't exactly have access to all the information I have today (let alone passes to shows!). I had no idea when the group would come around New York way and there was certainly no chance of poor little Donald making his own way into the big, bad city of Manhattan in order to attend a concert at Madison Square Garden with 20,000 screaming teenagers. It just wouldn't happen. I'd have to wait until I was at least 13. . .

Then one day, browsing through the newspaper, I saw it: *'Kiss appearing at Madison Square Garden, February 18, 1977. Tickets go on sale this week'.*

I knew this was my chance. But how to go? There was only one way to do it. At the risk of sounding ridiculous, and at the danger of being teased by my friends, I asked my father to get some tickets.

He reported back to me a week or two later.

"I got the tickets," was all he had to say.

WOOOOOEEEE!!!!!

EBRUARY 18 arrived much too slow, but it did finally creep up on us. I took the ferryboat across to Manhattan and met my father in the boat terminal, where he had headed after finishing work. The show was at eight o'clock. It was a perfect night for me: cold as February is, I sure as hell didn't feel it. I was going to SEE KISS!

Well, without turning this into a gig review, and without relaying to you all the problems we faced after getting out of the show (like my dad's car being towed away), I do want to tell you that it was the most magical experience of my young life.

There they were, the gods, larger than life and louder than hell, just like I'd imagined them to be, only a few hundred feet away. Did Paul Stanley point in my direction? I can't believe Ace's guitar actually blew up onstage! The fire-breathing was enormous! And the set – 'Detroit Rock City', 'Firehouse', 'Strutter', even 'Beth' with Peter sitting all alone at stagefront.

Later I found out it was Kiss' first appearance at the fabled Garden. A pinnacle of their career, and still one of the best concerts I've ever attended. I still have the pics my dad took to prove it.

Ironically, that concert was right at the beginning of my last big year as a Kiss fan and perhaps even their last year of complete domination of America.

'Love Gun' was released in June of that year, shipping platinum, and the group embarked upon yet another mega-tour, this time featuring new costumes and a futuristic stage set.

KONTINUEZ OVER

KISS

FROM PREVIOUZ PAGE

More Kiss merchandise sprang into view: the famous Kiss comic books (there were two). Kiss lunchpails, Kiss belt buckles, dozens of group and individual posters and T-shirts, the Kiss pinball machine, Kiss cards, Kiss jewelry, Kiss dolls, even Kiss make-up kits.

The band announced plans for their movie, 'Kiss Meets the Phantom', and also appeared on a Halloween special. One night, I stayed up way past my bedtime to watch a one-hour special about the band on network television. All my friends were into Kiss; most of the kids in my school were as well. 'Kiss Alive II' came out and was gobbled up by the millions within the first week of release.

The critics still ranted and raved about just how empty the group's music and marketing actually were, but no-one listened.

There were the usual idiot groups, precursors of the PMRC, who were convinced that Kiss stood for Knights In Satan's Service (oddly, there are some morons who still write the band's name in capital letters – KISS – as if they think the letters actually do stand for something!).

There were always rumours surrounding Kiss, as there are any supergroup: the most popular one within my circle of friends, which we often spent hours debating, was that underneath the greasepaint, Ace Frehley was a woman!

AT THE END of 1977, Kiss annouced that they were taking an extended two-year break from touring, since they had been on the road since 1974 in one fashion or another.

It was a depressing thought, especially since I missed their three concerts at the Garden in December, and to the Kiss Army of America, it was almost a nightmare to imagine two years without hearing from the boyz.

Don't worry, proclaimed the group, there was another record coming in the spring, as well as four solo albums to be released in the autumn. And don't forget that movie...

So there was plenty of Kiss to look forward to, but I know I was dealt a bill of goods when 'Double Platinum' came out in May of 1978. A compilation LP? We had just had a live album, which also was esentially a collection of previously available tracks. And now just a repackaging of old material... it left me feeling just a bit ripped-off.

The solo albums were interesting, but only Ace's didn't seem to be a cynical, half-baked job. And 'Kiss Meets The Phantom' – that *was* a cynical, half-baked job.

Even a 13 year-old kid could see that.

Yes, Kiss did make a few wrong moves in 1978, and add to that the fact that I was discovering other bands: I had just purchased 'Sin After Sin' and 'Stained Class' by Judas Priest and they had simply *blown* me away; the Scorpions were starting to make a little noise; and people were whispering about an English trio called Motörhead that were allegedly faster and heavier than anyone could believe.

While Kiss took their snooze and counted their money, others came to usurp the crown, at least in my heart.

For me it was Priest and Scorps and Dio-era Sabbath; for others it was the Crüe and latter-day Kiss babies.

And when Kiss did come back in 1979 with 'I Was Made For Lovin' You', that was the finish.

The group who had epitomised rebellion and rock 'n' roll for millions of American teenagers had sold out to the trends and cut a disco song!

Further downfalls occurred, and eventually we got into the '80s and Kiss' rebirth, but by then I lost interest.

Andy Warhol once said everyone would be famous for 15 minutes.

Kiss had three years and left an indelible impression on myself and millions of others that would never be forgotten.

A girl I know still carries her Kiss lunchpail to this day...

ACE FREHLEY: 'that man was just too f**kin' cool . . .'

Pic Jodi Mastroberti

THE AUTHOR today with his Kiss memorabilia

THE MASTERMIND behind Kiss merchandise mania: band manager Bill Aucoin, together with make-up kits, record players, lunchboxes, etc etc . . .

GENE SIMMONS: F-TOOOM!

ALICE
COOPER
Pic Joe Giron

THE ROOTS OF GLAM

A handy cut-out-and-keep guide to the oily-faced origins of Glam. Mincing missive by DEREK OLIVER

DESPITE MY attraction to Glam Rock, I must admit that I've never really felt the compulsion to borrow my mother's make-up bag and paint my face in a number of different shades, apply heavy mascara or smudge on lip gloss.

With a face like the inside of a coal bunker, I have a sneaking suspicion that somehow cosmetics and myself are destined to be eternally incompatible bedfellows.

Never mind, at least I've unwittingly extinguished the possibility of ever looking like some hideously overdressed drag queen. For the time being, at least.

The Glam era, for me, was at its height during the years 1971 to 1974. During this time you would've found a number of hugely successful rock and pop stars – from the lily-livered 'one man and his piano' rock of Elton John to the gross-out gloss of killer driller Alice Cooper – all going completely mad on make up.

Funnily enough, there was a fine line to be drawn between what was then termed theatrical rock, the stuff undertaken by Alice for example, and the true Glam stars of the era.

Glam meant glitter, and if the bands didn't wear sequins or stars on their clothes then they certainly weren't Glam.

Some stars, however, managed to combine the two extremes to great effect – David Bowie in particular, whose Ziggy Stardust persona merged art, theatrics and heavy Glam Rock perfectly.

AS TIME FLEW by, many artists took the roots of Glam (as defined by great rockers of the era like Mott The Hoople, Gary Glitter and Queen) and improved upon matters considerably.

Styling was all important– and if you didn't have the right amount of hair (baldies were often excluded) or use the correct method of back combing, then no matter how great your music was you'd never make the grade. That, funnily enough, is as true then as it is now.

Elsewhere in this issue you'll find re-reviews of the 10 greatest, or at least 10 of the most significant, Glam albums of all time presented in chronological order.

They are all my personal choice, but I think you'll agree that each one, in its own little way, had a radical impact on the Glam Rock scene, helping to nudge the genre one step forward every time.

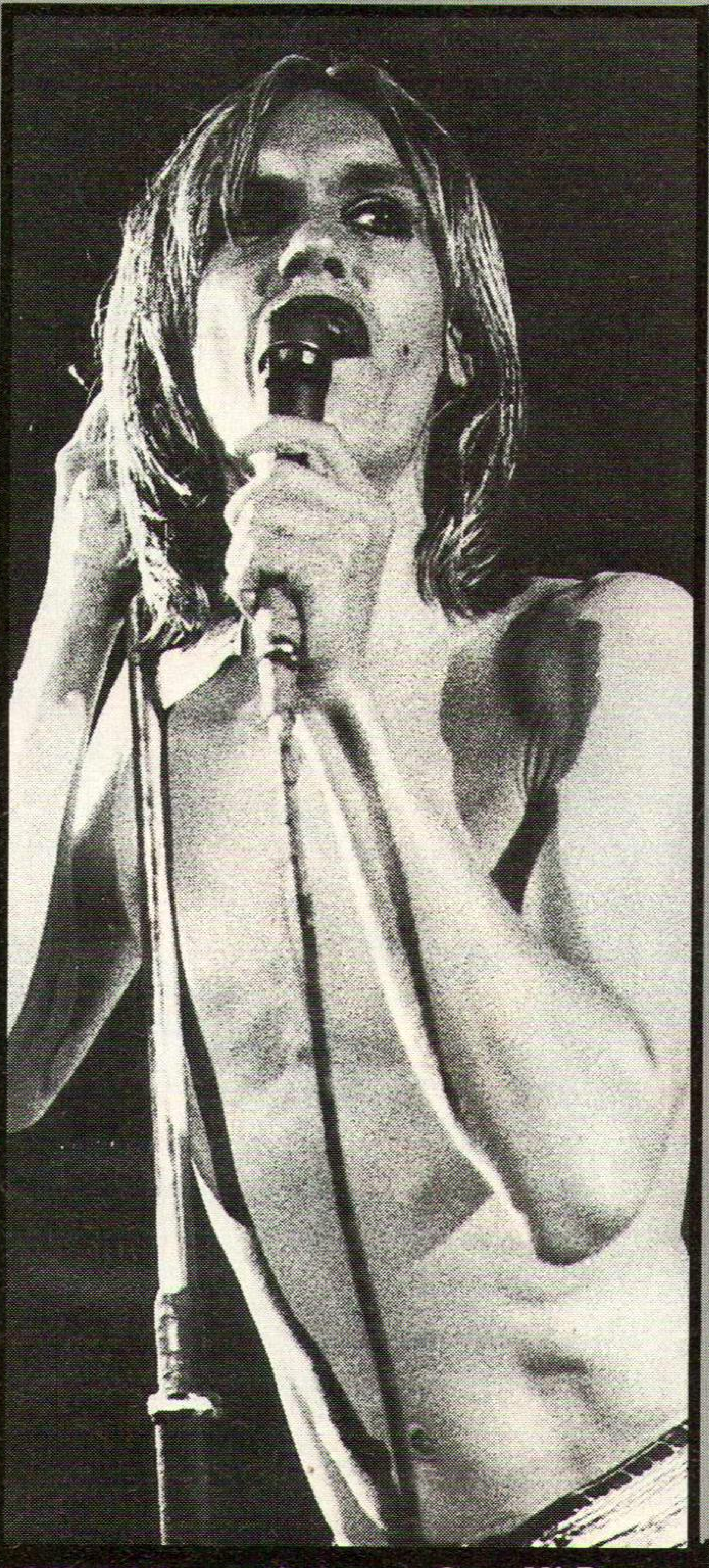
And that's not the end of matters either – because right this moment we are in the throes of yet another major talent explosion, with hundreds of new Glamsters coming out of the closet as we speak.

Bands like the Tattooed Love Boys, Tigertailz, St Jaimz and the Last Of The Teenage Idols are, whether you like 'em or not, coming through in a real big way. So get hip to the trip and join the party now.

In the meantime, here's a round-up of some of the most way out 'n' wacky Glam Rock outfits of the entire movement, from the very biggest to the most obscure.

Right, let's go f**king crazy . . .

CHICORY TIP: Glam warriors from the planet Xregysskqbi!



IGGY POP : godfather to Guns N' Roses

THE MOST in-your-face Glamsters of the classic early '70s boom period came primarily from the pop rock camp, although there were a stack of semi-serious hopefuls trying to make it on their music alone. Let's take 'em as they come to mind. And hey, don't forget to don the sequinned suits and those superbad booties.

The first of the classic pop rock Glam bands to make any sense at all were, quite obviously, **Chicory Tip**, who stormed to fame and a little fortune way back in 1972 with a mega-selling single 'Son Of My Father'.

Based in Maidstone, Kent, the band even managed to notch up a grand total of two more Top 20 toons (anyone remember 'Good Grief Christina'? No, I thought not!).

However, it was their first hit single which has far greater historical importance than the group itself, because it was the debut Number One to feature a synthesiser, even though it was played by their engineer and not by the band. Unbelievable!

Then, of course, there was the unmistakable rumble of **Gary Glitter** (although his link with Metal is rather tenuous to say the least) and **Slade**, who wielded neanderthal stack-heeled boots and became the ultimate teenybop Glam icons for almost four consecutive years.

One step further into the serious rock market were **Mott The Hoople**, who managed to mix mirth, Metal and maximum rock 'n' roll to wide acclaim from all sectors of the record buying public.

Mott with Ian Hunter in the driving seat made an awful lot of sense and it's no

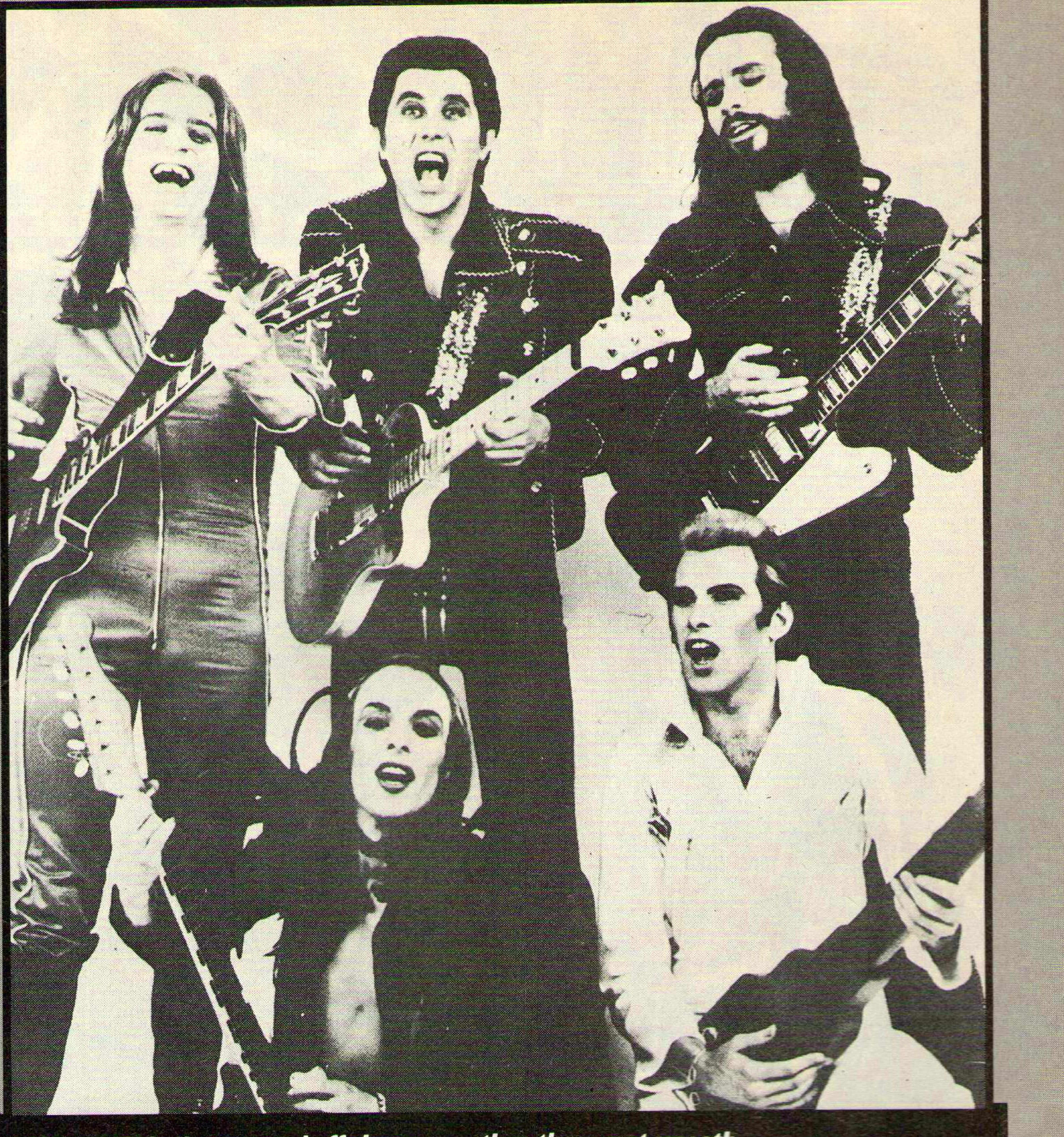
surprise that even as we speak the great man is still gaining fevered reactions from live audiences the world over.

Yup, you've guessed it, he's back in action (with Mick Ronson on guitar). And he doesn't look a day over 30, with ringlets aplenty and wraparound shades firmly fixed to his face.

Mott were great, they made ludicrous albums filled to the brim with 'Clockwork Orange' songs, and every member of the band had a personality and a silly name. Where is Ariel Bender? And what about that bloke called Overend Watts and his bloody unfeasibly high platform boots? Over and out.

Roxy Music, the kings of the art school set alongside **Queen**, made firm use of their youth and a mad keyboard player called Brian Eno. They came at us in a big way in 1972 with a self-titled debut album that contained a classic slice of flash in 'Virginia Plain', a prototype Glam classic with stylish sequins and piled-up hair from beginning to end.

By the end of 1973, however, following the eminently hip 'For Your Pleasure' opus, singer Bryan Ferry lashed out and slipped into something a little less flash. Welcome to the logical lounge lizard.



ROXY MUSIC: they started off sleazy . . . then they went smooth

MEANWHILE, ACROSS the Atlantic something called **Jobriath** was busily making albums for the Elektra label, trying cooly to emulate the Glam fall-out of David Bowie – or should that be Ziggy Stardust? Jobriath's sound and look cemented his failure from the start, and nobody except Geoff Barton's friend (?!) can even remember who the flip he was anyway.

Talking of good old doctor gonzo, it was **David Bowie** himself who tested the glitter rock era with considerable aplomb. He gave birth to a bouncing baby Glam Rocker called Ziggy Stardust some time in 1972 on 'The Rise And Fall . . .' set.

But just when he had a great thing going, the silly sod mock-Metalled him in 'Aladdin Sane' (1973), placed him into touch on 'Pin Ups' and pulled the plug on him with 'Diamond Dogs' (1974) which, without the fierce guitar work of Mick Ronson, whom he'd fired as the result of some mad brain storm, wasn't a great album anyway.

Nevertheless in those two short years Bowie proved himself the undisputed guru of Glam, pissing over weaklings like Gazza Glitter and, er, Jobriath.

Iggy Pop, I felt, remained typically low life. He was never Glam, in my book, and remains to this hour a fully fledged member of the sleaze patrol, godfather to Guns N' Roses and Dogs D'Amour to be sure. Bowie produced the '74 Iggy LP 'Raw Power', though, which I think at least vindicates his namecheck in this round up.

Then of course there were the dirty white boys, the ones you would never see on 'Top Of The Pops'. Some, like the **New York Dolls**, went all the way and embraced complete indulgence, ploughing their own solitary furrow to extinction.

They came first in the loser category despite the fact that they made two jolly albums of irredeemable hot rock, and even after half of the band had died they still kept going! Yes, things were bad, but somehow that never really seemed to bother the Dolls.

Sweet were crazee. They were the former pop pickers who traded in their short haircuts and acoustic guitars for six inch leather heels and more Bacofoil than a large hotel kitchen.

Out-weirded and out of their minds, the Sweet were certainly secret Metal rogues. By 1974 they had abandoned pop for album action. These dudes became Heavy Metal itself, making classic stompers, long concept segments and even instrumental tracks! Arrgh!

ENOUGH OF the feeble contenders, let's hear it for the rockers. We're talking joints, long hair, crushed velvet and huge silver stars here, OK?

They travelled in their hundreds to the Roundhouse to see **Silverhead**, but left in their thousands before the band had even started playing. It was too much too soon and far too loud. Silverhead made a big bad mistake coming on like fashion victims of a T. Rex fan club convention and their souped-up, spare Purple riffs made little sense to young girls already into their third pair of platform sandals.

Marc Bolan had the look that Michael Des Barres craved for, but unlike others he wasn't about to part with it without a struggle. By gosh, Silverhead even went to America a couple of times, causing more confusion than on their home turf. Pity.

Over in America **Kiss** mixed 'n' matched extravagant theatrics stolen from Alice Cooper with British Glam appeal. Never sure what was more important, Kiss tumbled through the '70s shying away from being a real Glam band by hiding the flash and shazam behind huge onstage explosions and rocket-puking guitars. Same thing goes with **Angel**, although I suspect more folk would point them in the theatrical direction rather than Glam.

And hey, before we leave the '70s entirely behind, let's not forget about a small but influential group called the **Hollywood Brats**. They may have been rather small time, but to serious minded pop rock pickers they meant big things.

The Brats were a London-based glitter band consisting of mainly Americans (like the New York Dolls, but with better musicians and great songs).

The Brats' self-titled album, recorded in 1973, was for some odd reason released only in Scandinavia, but was eventually plucked from certain obscurity by the great Indie label Cherry Records and issued in 1980. Check it out, if you can find a copy, it's hot!

We've reached the '80s and you ought to be able to separate the Glam from the glum over the last decade yerself. Mind you, if you were born yesterday I'll finish with a list that is by no means comprehensive but is certainly concise enough to turn any casual observer into a raving Glam-crazed, gun-wielding monster.

Heads down, see yer at the end . . .

Alien (the New York lot, not the Swedish AOR band), **Belladonna**, **Black Lace**, **Britny Fox**, **Candy**, **Candy Roxx**, **Castle Blak**, **Cherry Bombz**, **Cloven Hoof**, **Cry Wolf** (UK), **Diamond Rexx**, **D'Molls**, **EZO**, **Geisha**, **Hell**, **Ivory Tower**, **Kerry Doll**, **Kingpin**, **London**, **Mötley Crüe**, **Noize Toyz**, **No Shame**, **Pharoah**, **Pink Rose**, **Pretty Boy Floyd**, **Queen Bitch**, **Rabbit**, **Rock Candy**, **Rox**, **Shy** (on their very first album 'Once Bitten, Twice . . .'), **Silverwing**, **Sigue Sigue Sputnik**, **Smashed Gladys**, **Snowmen**, **Sweet Pain**, **Tarazara**, **Taste**, **Teaze**, **Teeze**, **Tigertailz**, **Tuff**, **The Wild**, **Witch**, **Wrathchild** . . . and many, many more who never got past the demo stage.

Shine on, you crazy diamonds. Shine on!

GLAM ROCK A-Z

Compiled by RAY ZELL

'G' IS for 'Glitter' . . .

A IS FOR 'Aerosmith Riff'. 'Nuff said.

B IS FOR 'Big Hair', 'Backcombing', 'Bracelets', 'Bonk Rock', and if yer name happens to be Steevi Jaimz – 'Black Eyes'!

C IS FOR 'Chicks With Dicks', 'Crimpers' and for the part-time Glam Rocker with the office job – 'Crazy Colour'.

D IS FOR 'Diamante' but moreso (especially if yer name happens to be Steevi Jaimz!) for 'Drunk'.

E IS FOR 'Earrings' and that handy-dandy-keep-it-in-yer-pocket-don't-dare-go-anywhere-without-it . . . 'Eyeliner Pencil'! (Ask Wilding!)

F IS FOR 'Fishnet', and if yer name happens to be Steevi Jaimz then it's for 'Fighting', whereas if yer name happens to be anythin' ya like, ie Mike Blitzkrieg etc, then F is for 'Fu. . . ', er, 'Makin' Love' . . . !

G IS OF course for 'Glam', 'Groupies', 'Glitter' and a certain shady little London nightspot called 'Gossips'.

H IS FOR 'Hairspray' (and lots of it!), 'Hair Dye', 'Hairdryers', 'Hanoi Rocks' and 'Hot Babes'.

I IS FOR 'Iffy', which pretty much sums up a lot of attempts at the 'Glam' image!

J IS FOR 'Jack Daniel's'. 'Nuff said.

K IS FOR 'Kiss'. Not necessarily the band, but the classic cherry-red cracked-stain that almost symbolises 'Glam'. MWAH!!!

L IN ITS lusciousness is for 'Lipstick', 'Leather', 'Leopardskin', 'LA' and 'London'!

M IS FOR 'Mousse Abuse', 'Mirrors' and that perfect couple who never fail to kiss and make-up, 'Mary Quant' and 'Max Factor'.

N IS FOR New York Dolls. 'Nuff said.

O IS FOR "Oi, poof!"

P IN ITS provocativeness is for 'Peroxide' (natch!), 'Preening', 'Posing' and 'Pouting'. Oh, what would we do without 'M' for Mirror?!

Q IS FOR 'Queen', as in the 'ageing Glam variety', ie Gary Glitter, Sweet and, perish forbid, it has even been suggested that the all-knowin' compiler of this A-Z could be one!

R IS FOR the ever-descriptive 'Ragamuffin', but essentially for. . . 'Rock 'n' Roll'.

S IN ITS seductiveness is for 'Stack Heels', 'Stilettos', 'Spandex', 'Sister's Wardrobe', 'Stupid Surnames', 'Sleaze' and. . . well, from what I've heard. . . 'Sex In Toilets' (!).

T IS FOR 'Trash' and that fetchin' Glam accessory – the 'Top Hat'.

U IS, I suppose, for 'Unisex'. . . or *any* kinda sex come to that. . . !

V IS FOR 'Vampires' and lamented London Glam nite-klub 'Valley Of The Dolls'.

W IS UNQUESTIONABLY for 'Wrathchild', 'Woofs', and the look popularised by Keef 'n' Thunders – 'Wasted'.

X IS FOR X-tensions. . . er, of the hair, natch! (Er. . . then again. . . !

Y IS FOR yer Ma 'n' Pa askin', either in anger or utter despair, "Y do you dress up like that?!"

Z – HEY-Y-Y, LET'S be realistic here, Glamsters 'n' Glamesses. . . Z is for Zell!

Pic Mark Weiss

TOM KEIFER
(CINDERELLA)

Pic Ross Halfin